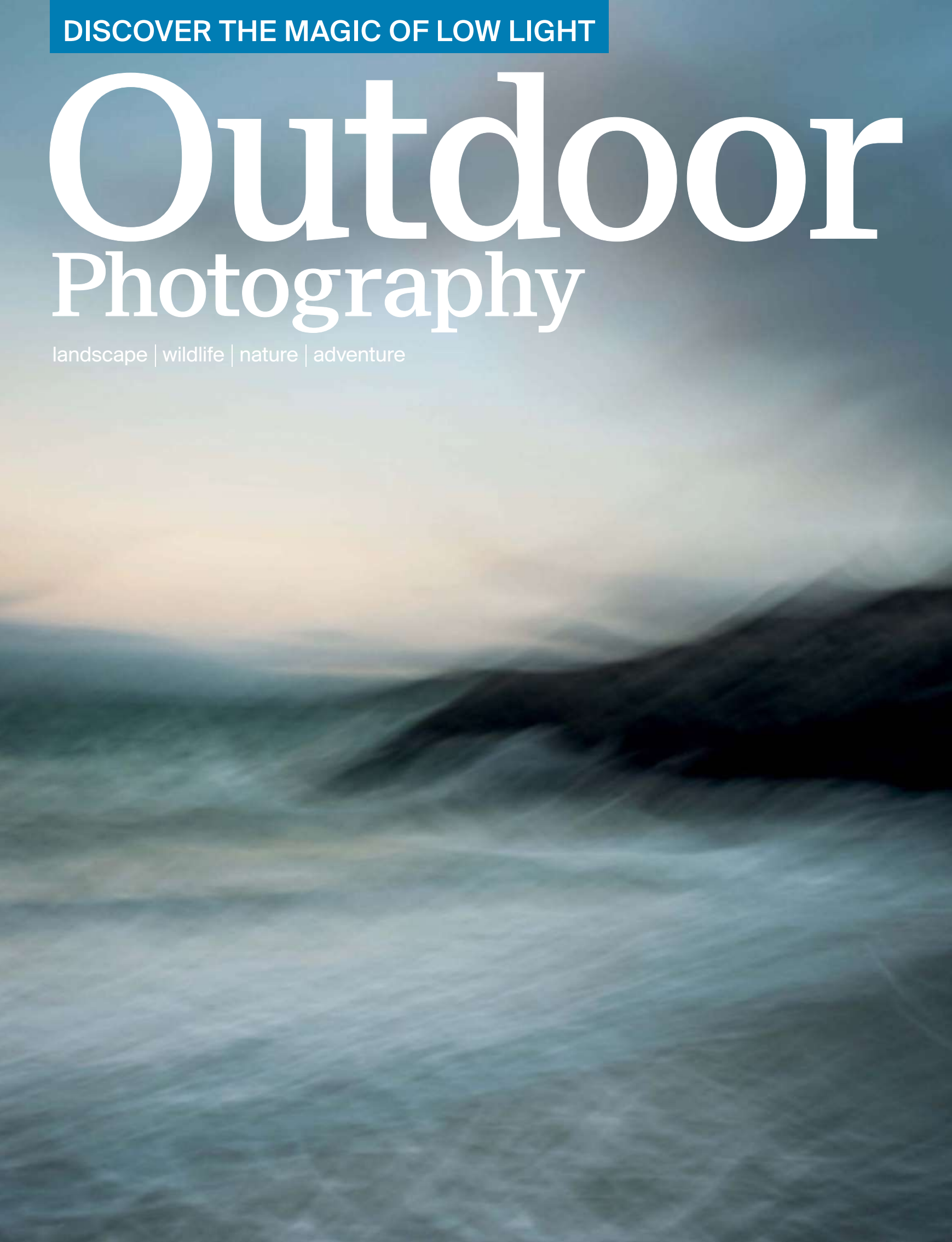
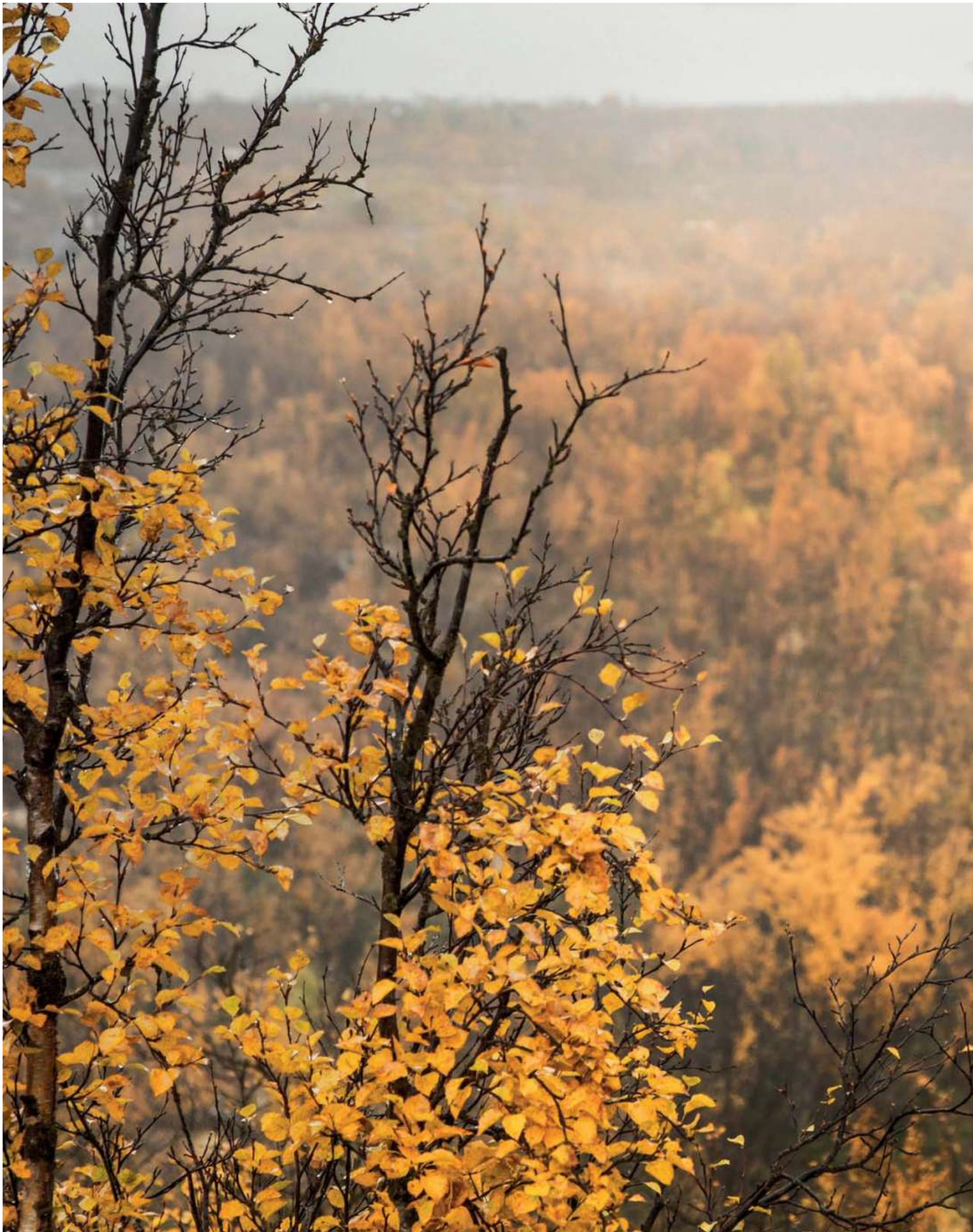


DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF LOW LIGHT

Outdoor Photography

landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure







Keb Eco-Shell Jacket ♂♀

WATERPROOF AND BREATHABLE IS NOT ENOUGH

FUNCTIONAL and sustainable, this autumn *Fjällräven* introduces a revolutionary collection of *Eco-Shell* garments. Offering outstanding waterproof and breathable performance, the new *Eco-Shell* garments also boast exceptional environmental credentials.

Made from 100% polyester, both recycled and new, the garments are well prepared for future recycling. This, together with an advanced fluorocarbon-free impregnation, makes *Fjällräven Eco-Shell* garments kind to the environment, yet tough against the elements



www.fjallraven.co.uk

EDITOR'S LETTER

Which shot would you choose?

If you could take only one more photograph (and I mean ever), what photograph would you choose to take? Which location would you go to, or what wildlife, nature or adventure subject would you choose? What type of light would you wait for? What point of view would you select?

It's far too easy – unless you happen to shoot large format film of course – to go out there and just rattle off a whole load of frames that have too little time spent on them. There is something very compelling about the 'if I shoot enough I should get something' approach to photography, but we must resist its temptations with all our willpower. There are so many images out there shot in exactly that way that the only way to differentiate our work is to fully re-focus on the craft of what we do.

If your answers to the opening questions above were general ones, then revisit them and try to be more exact in the detail of what you opt for. Which location? Instead of 'Glencoe', the answer could be 'the little burn I saw last time I was there, which runs

down the flank of Buachaille Etive Beag.' Craftsmanship in any pursuit is based largely on attention to detail, and the more we concentrate and deliberate on the small things when making our photography decisions, the more likely it is that the big things, the end photographs, are going to be something special.

Time is priceless in this respect, so it makes absolute sense, if we want to take our photography to the best level it can be, to slow down and take fewer images. I suspect that the improvements will be almost immediately noticeable, and there are no prizes for having the most hard drives crammed full of unprocessed Raw files.

There have been several high profile 'one-a-day' photography projects (Jim Brandenburg's *Chased by the Light* is one of the best and a great one to inspire), and it would be awesome if we were all to commit to trying this for at least a week over the next few months. Less is surely more!

Steve Watkins



GET IN TOUCH

EMAIL Contact the Editor, Steve Watkins, at steve@thegmcgroup.com or Deputy Editor, Claire Blow, at claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

WRITE TO US Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XN



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COVER IMAGE

Mark Littlejohn took this emotive low light image at Arisaig in Lochaber, Scotland; it was one of his first attempts at using the intentional camera movement technique. Find out how to take your own low light photos on page 30.

THE ISSUE at a glance



Bernhard Edmaier talks about his epic aerial project *Water* – page 18



Norman McCloskey explains why low light is perfect light – page 30



See some of the winners from Wildlife Photographer of the Year – page 66



Andy Luck puts the new Sony A7R II through its paces – page 90



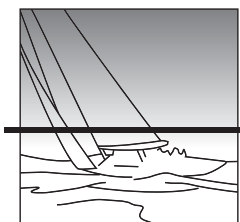
RANGER, SAINT-TROPEZ

Photographing at sea is a huge passion of mine, and something I do regularly for clients such as Ralph Lauren and Hilton Hotels. But working in this environment does have its fair share of problems: the damp, the salt, and of course the ever changing light. Shooting an 80 metre long wooden sailing boat from a fast moving speedboat is a far cry from traditional landscape photography; I love working at dawn on a misty lake, the peace and tranquility, the time to set up, the stability of a good tripod and a brace of essential filters, but I also adore shooting classic yachts; the speed, the excitement, testing yourself and your equipment as you bounce around the Mediterranean for 8 hours a day, it's incredibly addictive!

Because I shoot the yachts during the daytime, when the sky is bright and the sea a dark, indigo blue, I always use the camera handheld, fitted with a LEE 0.6 ND Graduated Filter to hold back the sky and control the light. I use a soft grad which darkens the sky perfectly without effecting the sails and masts which would be problematic with a hard grad. I also find that using the grad whilst shooting stops any 'banding' that may appear when using digital graduated filters during post-processing. If I can get it right 'in-camera' that suits me as I don't really like spending hours at a computer trying to fix things!

Chritchley

Jonathan Chritchley
www.jonathanchritchley.com



Nikon D800, Nikon 22-70mm F2.8 @ 31mm
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IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



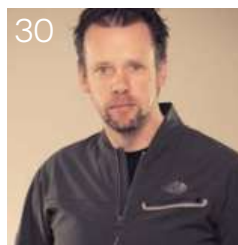
Mark Littlejohn is a hillwalker turned photographer based midway between the Eden Valley and Ullswater in the Lake District. He likes the little view more than the grand vista and his favourite images tend to be those taken during aimless wanderings close to home. markljphotography.co.uk



For more than 20 years, photographer and geologist **Bernhard Edmaier** has been taking pictures of the Earth, predominantly in places where it was formed by natural forces alone, over long geological time periods. His groundbreaking aerial images have been widely published and exhibited. bernhardedmaier.com



Nick Smith is a writer and photographer specialising in travel and environmental issues. He is a contributing editor on the *Explorers Journal* and is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. nicksmithphoto.com



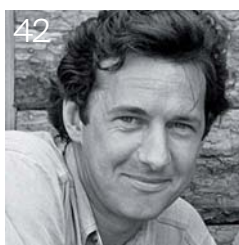
Norman McCloskey is a professional landscape photographer, author and gallery owner based in the south-west of Ireland, which is the subject of most of his work. He is a tour leader for Light & Land and runs smaller workshops at home. normanmcloskey.com



Craig Roberts is a British landscape and travel photographer. He runs a range of online courses on the basic and advanced techniques of creative outdoor photography. He also offers tailor-made workshops. craigrobertsphotography.co.uk



Claire Carter has recently left teaching to become a full-time photographer. She is based in Shropshire and leads bird of prey and landscape workshops, gives talks to photography societies and travels widely in search of good light. carterart.co.uk



Paul Harris trained as a photojournalist. He is passionate about storytelling through his travel, adventure and documentary imagery; balancing the road less travelled with the spirit of the land and its peoples. Paul also leads photo tours for Wild Photography Holidays. paulharrisphotography.com



Graham Lawson is a landscape photographer based in Bristol. As well as frequenting locations close to home, he travels across Britain to capture the varied landscapes of the country. He is planning his first solo exhibition in 2016. grahamlawson.com



Ron Evans is a professional photographer who mostly shoots horticultural stock imagery. His work has been widely published in advertisements, books and magazines. His passion is for nature and landscapes, particularly those of Cannock Chase in Staffordshire. ronevans.co.uk



Chris Weston is a professional wildlife photojournalist. He has travelled widely to document the issues and challenges facing many of the world's rarest species, and is the principal photographer for the NGO Animals on the Edge. chrisweston.photography



James Shooter is a nature photographer based in the Cairngorms National Park, specialising in wildlife and conservation stories. Alongside his own work he leads photography tours for Northshots and is a director of the Wild Media Foundation. jamesshooter.com



Andy Luck is an award-winning wildlife short programme producer, and also an environmental photojournalist with a passion for cameras and photography. His work has been widely published, and he is a regular contributor to *OP*. wildopeneye.com

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Outdoor Photography

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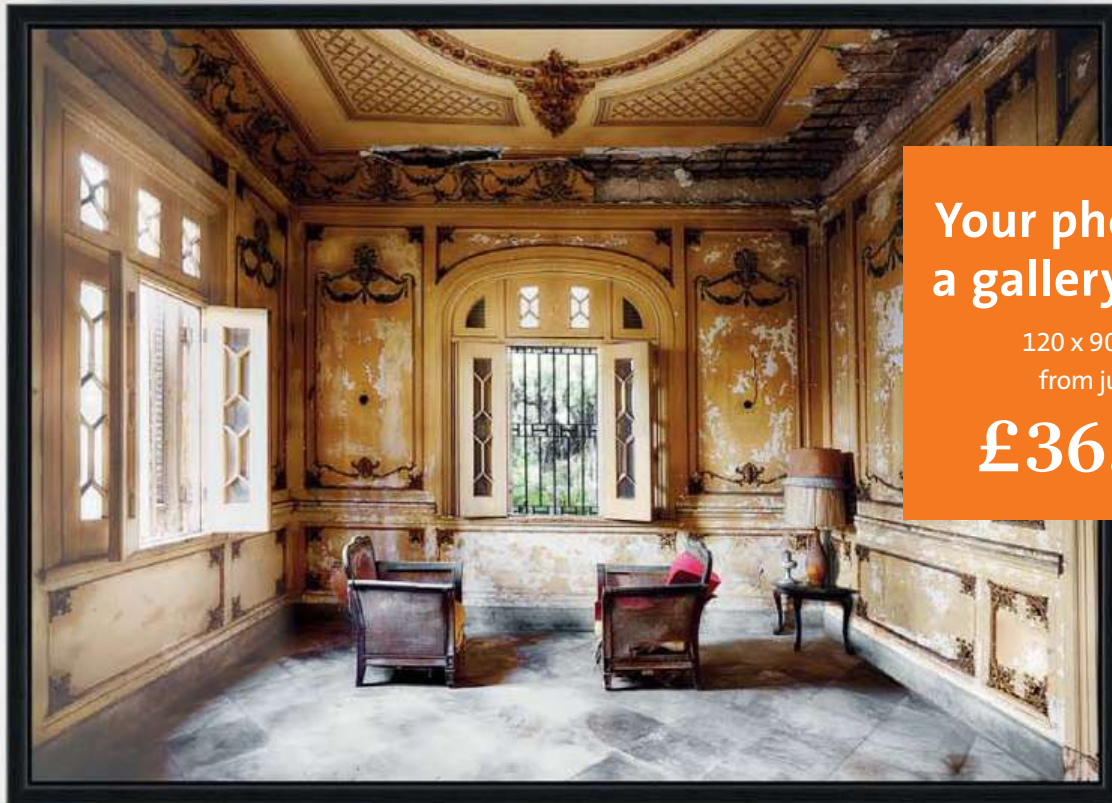
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INTO THE DARKNESS THE ART OF LOW LIGHT LANDSCAPES

30

FEATURES & OPINION

18 In conversation with...

Bernhard Edmaier

Aerial landscape photographer Bernhard Edmaier talks to Nick Smith about his latest epic project, Water

26 One month, one picture

Pete Bridgwood explains why getting the exposure right in-camera can pay dividends in the digital darkroom

40 Lie of the land

Claire Carter shares the thrill of witnessing the northern lights for the first time

42 Opinion

Paul Harris on the benefits of making return visits to places that ignite your imagination

55 Inside track

Nick Smith explains why he made the transition from travel writer to photojournalist

62 A photographer's guide to life on Earth

Chris Weston explores how focusing too much on specific goals can hinder creativity

66 Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015

Our pick of the best images from this international wildlife photography competition

72 In the spotlight

Travel photographer Christopher Roche talks about his search for original images and his new book on Ethiopia

LEARNING ZONE

30 Explore the beauty of low light

Discover a new world of photographic opportunities, as Norman McCloskey reveals how shooting in low light conditions – at any time of day – can result in dramatic images

38 Quick guide to... shooting reflections

Craig Roberts reveals how to use the reflective qualities of water to your advantage

LOCATIONS GUIDE

46 Clogwyn y Garreg, Gwynedd

Graham Lawson shoots a classic mountain vista in scenic Snowdonia

49 Cannock Chase, Staffordshire

Ron Evans heads to his favourite local haunt in search of autumn colour

50 Viewpoints

Eight top UK locations to shoot this month, including Grasmere in Cumbria, Loch Torren in Argyll and Dartmoor's Bench Tor



46



38



82



42

NATURE ZONE

76 Life in the wild

Laurie Campbell uses an extreme macro technique to photograph wood ants

78 Photography guide

Laurie's seasonal highlights, world wildlife spectacles and top places for viewing nature

81 A moment with nature

James Shooter enjoys some wild encounters during his first trip to Iceland

82 On the wing

Steve Young takes advantage of an opportunity to get close-up with a kestrel and shares his birding tips for November

GEAR ZONE

88 Gearing up

Our round-up of the latest outdoor kit to hit the shelves

90 Camera test: Sony A7R II

Andy Luck tries out the latest high-spec addition to Sony's A7 range of full-frame mirrorless cameras



NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 19 NOVEMBER 2015

- » How to photograph winter landscapes
- » Camera test: Panasonic Lumix DMC-G7
- » Landscape Photographer of the Year 2015: the winners

REGULARS

10 Newsroom

Keeping you up to date with the latest photography, outdoor and conservation stories

12 Out there

Our pick of the latest photo books, including a selection of self-published releases

14 The big view

Top photography exhibitions, talks and events, plus what to look forward to at this year's Kendal Mountain Festival

YOUR OP

16 Your letters

Your feedback, opinions and musings

54 Next month

A sneak peek at the December issue of *OP*

57 Reader gallery

Our pick of this month's best reader images

84 Your chance

How to get published in *OP*

106 If you only do one thing this month...

The winners of our 'water' photography competition

112 Where in the world?

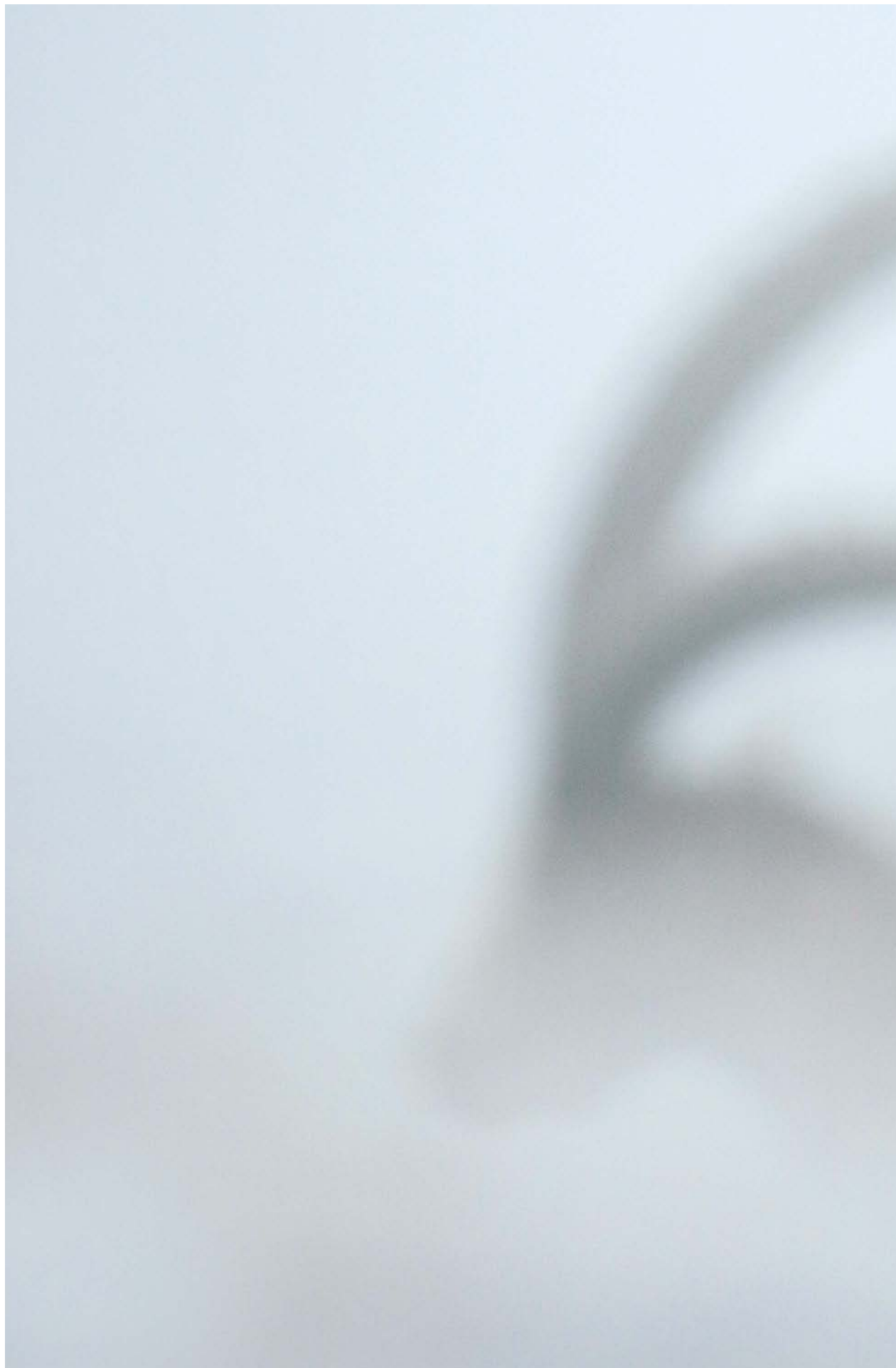
Correctly identify the location featured and you could win a Manfrotto backpack!

Cave painting

by Thomas Delahaye

I took this photograph in the French Alps, at an altitude of about 2,500m. I was following male ibexes, and after an hour or so the fog came in. It was a little crazy, as we couldn't see more than 15m in front of us! I had an idea to make a soft-focus image in order to capture the silhouette of the ibex, which is easily identifiable from its horns. Due to the fog, and because I used a foreground rock to add softness to the image, the resulting image resembles a prehistoric cave painting.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 500mm f/4 L IS II USM lens, ISO 1250, 1/2000sec at f/5





NEWSROOM

CONSERVATION

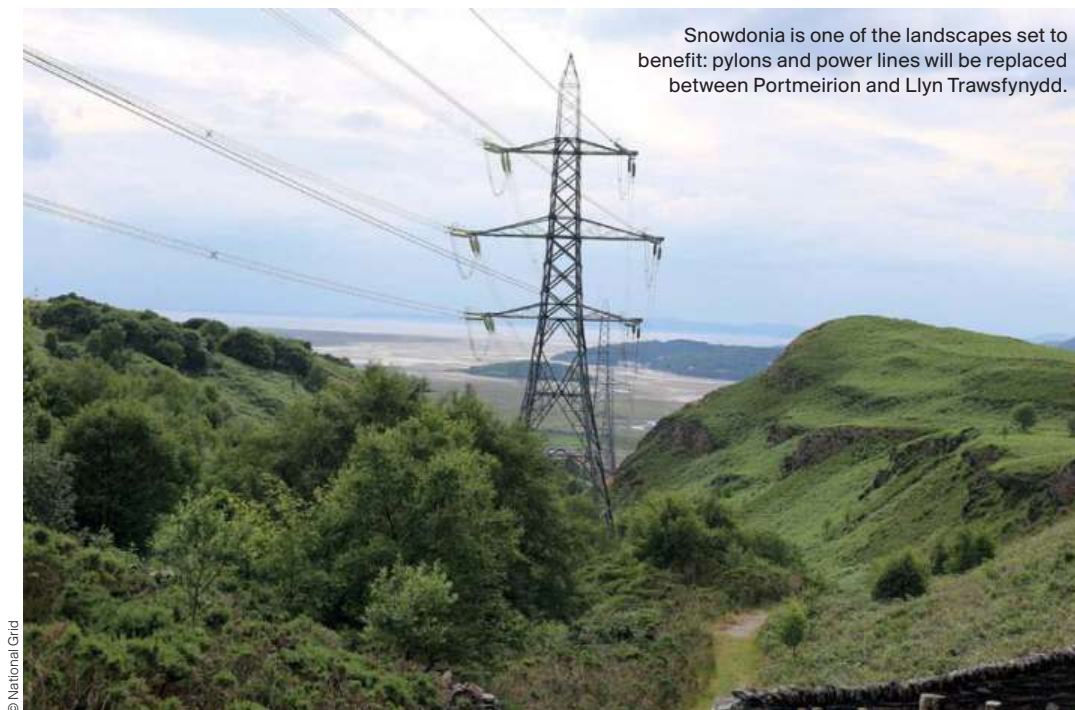
NEW LAUNCHES

COMPETITIONS

OUTDOORS

TECHNOLOGY

OTHER NEWS



Snowdonia is one of the landscapes set to benefit: pylons and power lines will be replaced between Portmeirion and Llyn Trawsfynydd.

© National Grid

Pylon removal project set to improve scenery in four protected landscapes

Overhead power lines are to be removed in four protected areas of England and Wales as part of a £500m landscape-enhancing project by National Grid.

A total of 45 electricity pylons and nearly 10 miles of power lines will be relocated or replaced with underground cables in parts of the New Forest, the Peak District, Snowdonia and Dorset.

The schemes were chosen from a shortlist of 12 sections of electricity lines in eight national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) that were considered by National Grid to have 'the most significant landscape and visual impact'.

The project focuses on four stretches of power lines:

- » Dorset AONB, near Winterbourne Abbas
- » New Forest National Park, near Hale

- » Peak District National Park, near Dunford Bridge
- » Snowdonia National Park, near Porthmadog

Sites in the Brecon Beacons National Park, the High Weald in East Sussex, the North Wessex Downs and the Tamar Valley between Devon and Cornwall were among those to lose out on the funding, which has been provided by energy regulator Ofgem.

Environmentalist Chris Baines, who chaired the group of conservation organisations that advised National Grid, said deciding which schemes should benefit from the funding had involved some 'difficult decisions'. But he added that 'none of the locations on our original shortlist have been dropped and they will remain under consideration for future work to reduce the impact of National Grid's transmission lines under the Visual Impact Provision project.' nationalgrid.com/uk

Canon and Sony announce groundbreaking sensor technology

Canon has announced that it is developing a DSLR camera featuring a 120MP CMOS sensor – more than twice the size of the firm's recently released 5Ds and 5Ds R, which 'only' have 50.6 megapixels. The camera, which will be part of the EOS series, will be compatible with Canon's EF lenses and will make it possible to make metre-wide prints without the need to upscale. Canon says the DSLR will 'recreate the three-dimensional texture, feel and presence of subjects, making them appear as if they are really before one's eyes.'

Another product Canon is working on is an 8K video camera aimed at professionals. Featuring a 35mm (equivalent) CMOS sensor with 8192 x 4320 pixels, the Cinema EOS camera will offer 60fps shooting and 13 stops of dynamic range.

Just a few days after Canon made public its plans, Sony revealed that it is building image sensors capable of capturing 1,000 frames per second – that's 10 times faster than the human eye can see. Unlike conventional sensors, which are designed with light-receiving elements side-by-side, Sony's method allows the technology to be stacked; the result is a smaller package that delivers faster performance and improved resolution. While image sensors capable of 1,000fps already exist, their size and cost means they are impractical for commercial use. The new technology could bring high-speed photography to the masses, and could also play an important role within the robotics sector and the future of driverless cars.



© David Russell

Cairngorms landscape shot wins national competition

An atmospheric image of Glen Feshie in the Cairngorms, by David Russell, has won the 2015 UK National Parks Photo Competition. The annual contest aims to showcase the diverse landscapes of the UK's 15 national parks. This year, photographers were invited to celebrate Britain's 'Landscapes of Plenty' by capturing images that highlight the beauty and productivity of the national parks.

Describing his photo, David said: 'We go to wild places to breathe and have our breath taken away by the sights and the space. The Cairngorms are my "landscape of plenty" because they never, ever disappoint. Wide open spaces, wild blooming heather and hills, hills, hills; spaces and sights worth remembering.'

See the shortlisted images at nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/photo-competition

National Geographic signs deal with Fox

The National Geographic Society has signed a major agreement with 21st Century Fox. In a transaction valued at \$725m, Fox will take ownership of 73% of National Geographic's media assets.

An umbrella company called National Geographic Partners will be formed as part of the deal, and will combine the National Geographic television channels with National Geographic's other media and consumer-oriented assets – including its iconic yellow-bordered magazine.

In a statement, the Society – which has been a non-profit organisation since it was founded in 1888 – says combining the assets into one organisation will 'create greater opportunities to pursue National Geographic's mission of increasing knowledge through science exploration and research.'

While the partnership will boost funds needed to undertake projects, Fox owner Rupert Murdoch describes himself as a climate change sceptic, so time will tell if this influences the direction of the new venture.

NUMBER CRUNCH

6 new Zeiss lenses have been released for Canon and Nikon DSLRs. The 'Milvus' family of manual focus lenses includes a 21mm f/2.8, 35mm f/2, 50mm f/1.4, 85mm f/1.4, 50mm f/2, and 100mm f/2. Optimised for high-resolution cameras, the weatherproofed lenses cost from £690, for the 35mm f/2 model. Further focal lengths will be added over the next few years.

zeiss.com



935 – the minimum number of badgers that are to be culled in England by 31 January 2016. Following pilots in Gloucestershire and Somerset, the government has extended the cull into Dorset in an effort to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis. Dorset Wildlife Trust said in a statement that it is 'shocked and deeply saddened' by the news, adding that it will not allow culling on any of its 44 nature reserves.



© Ted Gore

USA Landscape Photographer of the Year winner revealed

The title of USA Landscape Photographer of the Year 2015 has been awarded to Los Angeles-based Ted Gore. Part of his winning portfolio, the image shown here depicts an impressive cloud formation as it passes over the Mesquite sand dunes in Death Valley, California.

'I've been lucky to get some pretty interesting conditions the few times I've been to this area,' said Ted. 'I shot this at the tail-end of a week-long trip in the Eastern Sierra where I drove thousands of miles in search of great compositions and weather conditions. This was certainly a highlight.'

To find out more about the competition, go to usalandscapenphotographeroftheyear.com.

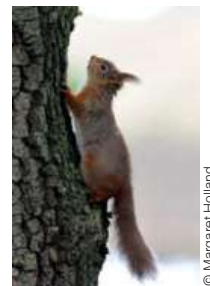
See our selection of the winning, runner-up and commended images at outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk

1,250

volunteers across the UK will be involved in a unique new project to secure the future of our native red squirrels, thanks

to a £1.2m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Red Squirrel United initiative, led by the Wildlife Trusts, aims to protect red squirrels through communication, education and conservation activities.

wildlifetrusts.org



© Margaret Holland

53 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three RSPB nature reserves are included in the 27 blocks of land that are to be formally offered to fracking companies for exploration. The RSPB is urging the government to introduce new measures to ban the process within all protected areas.

rspb.co.uk

OUT THERE

IN PRINT

Arctica: The vanishing north

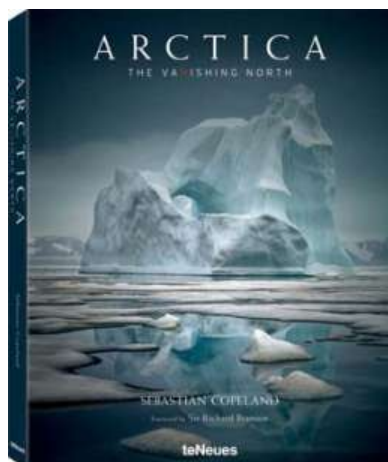
Sebastian Copeland

» *teNeues*

» 9783832732813

» Hardback, £80

Renowned photographer and explorer Sebastian Copeland's remarkable images of the Arctic tell the story of a changing environment, reminding us that we need to rethink our attitudes towards nature. With pictures printed full page, and some set over three



© 2015 Sebastian Copeland

pages (thanks to pull-out sections interspersed throughout), this huge book gives Copeland's images the impact they deserve. With supporting texts by climate scientist Professor

Andrew Weaver, research scientist Ted Scambos and Norwegian polar explorer Børge Ousland, Copeland has produced a wonderful tribute to one of Earth's most beautiful regions.

above Ellesmere Island, Canadian Arctic.



Cabin Porn: Inspiration for your quiet place somewhere

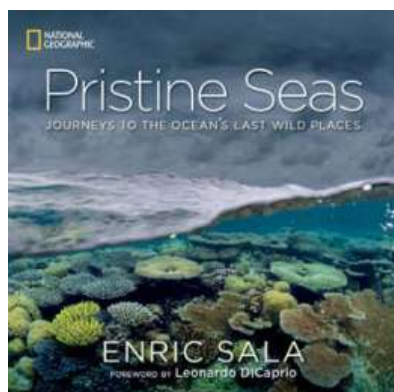
Zach Klein

» *Particular Books*

» 9781846148804

» Hardback, £20

After Zach Klein created Vimeo – an online community that now has more than 20 million users – he found he



wanted more out of life. Deciding to escape the city and connect with nature, Klein and a group of friends travelled to upstate New York and built themselves a cabin in the woods as a place to take a respite when it was needed.

Keen to tell their story and to encourage others to share pictures of similar projects, they created the website

Cabin Porn. A scrapbook of tiny, remote, handmade huts found in beautiful wildernesses all over the world, the site ignited people's desire for an idyllic lifestyle. Six years on it has 350,000 followers on Tumblr and has posted more than 12,000 cabins online.

The book features 200 of Zach and his team's favourite places. Ten special stories and photo collections are also included, and if you fancy trying your hand at building your own cabin, you'll find plenty of inspiration here; topics include 'how to build a yurt' and 'how to live underground'.

Everest: Mountain without mercy

Broughton Coburn

» *National Geographic*

» 9781426215858

» Paperback, £18.99

The recent release of Universal's feature film Everest, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Keira Knightly, has prompted National Geographic to reintroduce one of its bestselling titles.

Documenting the events of a deadly day on Everest in May 1996, when a violent storm claimed the lives of eight climbers and guides, the book tells the story of how a team of filmmakers became an essential part of an extreme rescue mission; David Breashears and his crew were on an assignment to capture large-format footage of the mountain using a specially adapted IMAX camera when disaster struck.

Featuring never-before-published panoramics of Everest and the Himalaya, and a new foreword by world-renowned climber Conrad Anker, *Everest: Mountain without mercy* offers a fascinating insight into one of the most inhospitable yet alluring regions on Earth.

Claire Blow

Pristine Seas: Journeys to the ocean's last wild places

Enric Sala

» National Geographic

» 9781426216114

» Hardback, £25

Around ten years ago Enric Sala set up his Pristine Seas project with National Geographic to bring worldwide attention to the many threats facing our oceans. Following a decade of exploration, research and campaigning, he has helped secure protection for a total of two-million square kilometres of ocean. *Pristine Seas* documents Sala's endeavours and showcases his talents as an oceanographer. With his stunning photographs of the West African coastline of Gabon, equatorial paradises off Chile and the uninhabited archipelago of Franz Josef Land in the Russian Arctic, Sala reveals underwater locations where civilisation has not yet destroyed the marine life. Interspersed throughout are Sala's personal narratives, helping to paint a powerful portrait of some of the planet's most amazing ecosystems.

© Enric Sala



SELF PUBLISHED PHOTO BOOKS

Self-publishing is becoming more popular in the photography world. Here are four recently released nature books, produced by working photographers, to inspire you

Learning to See and Visual Design

Rafael Rojas

» E-book

Highly dedicated to all aspects of his photography, Rafael Rojas' latest e-book is a triumph. Although covering the complex, rather philosophical topics of the medium – such as seeing, perception and reality – Rojas communicates his ideas clearly and invites us to actively think about photography. He takes us through ways of analysing a scene and training our imagination, and explains how to introduce visual style. With its engaging design and, of course, stunning pictures throughout, this e-book should be downloaded on to everyone's tablet.

The e-book costs 10 Swiss francs (approximately £7). Available from rafaelrojas.com



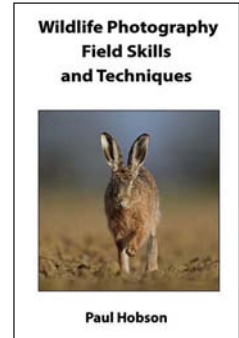
Wildlife Photography Field Skills and Techniques

Paul Hobson

» 9780957026599

» Paperback

If you're looking for a detailed, in-depth, tutorial book about wildlife photography, then Paul Hobson's new release is just for you; his training as a wildlife conservationist plus 20 years' experience as an environmental science lecturer has helped make him an expert on the subject. In the introduction Hobson lays out all the basics, from ethics and licenses to equipment and hides. Five chapters follow, covering different types of wildlife – such as reptiles, mammals and invertebrates – with advice on which lenses and camera settings to use. The book costs £16.99 plus £3 P&P. Available from paulhobson.co.uk



Gathering Place

Ken Waldie

» Envisage Books

» 9780993227707

» Paperback (with slipcase)

Found in Scotland's Wester Ross region, Loch Ewe was used as a naval base for the assembly of convoys to deliver military supplies to Russia between 1942 and 1944. Revealing the loch as both an area rooted in wartime history and a place of beauty, photographer Ken Waldie has produced a charming, 34-page self-published photo book. Documenting the area's military relics, which are beginning to merge into the surrounding landscape, *Gathering Place* includes 12 black & white images, each accompanied by a charming poem written by Waldie, and a foreword by Arctic convoy veteran Captain Rolfe Monteith. This is a sensitive book illuminating a specific period of UK history to full effect.

The book costs £15 plus £4.50 P&P. A special edition of the book (includes a print) costs £65 plus £8 P&P. Available from kenwaldie.co.uk

The Floods

Joseph Wright

» Envisage Books

» 9780993089206

» Paperback

Books are often considered important objects, things that require respect and care, and *The Floods* by Joseph Wright is a fine example of this. Hand bound, with beautifully printed images throughout and a cover made from recycled materials, as soon as you pick up this high-end photo book you know you're handling something special. A collection of flooded woodland landscapes, *The Floods* takes on an almost otherworldly aesthetic, drawing the viewer in. Each image is accompanied by a short paragraph that continues a narrative on these forgotten landscapes – areas the artist calls 'the antithesis of the idealistic English countryside'. The overall effect is haunting.

Josh Alliston

The standard edition costs £45 (limited to 70 copies); the Collector's Edition costs £125. Available from joewrightphotography.com



THE BIG VIEW



© Craig Aitchison

EXHIBITIONS

1 Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year 2014

» Battleby Centre, Perth
» 16 November to 8 January 2016

The Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year exhibition reaches the final stop of its tour this winter. Launched last year, the competition highlights Scotland's landscapes, seascapes and urban environments, and celebrates the photographers who seek to capture the country's beauty and diversity. Glasgow-based Craig Aitchison was the overall winner of the 2014 competition, with his portfolio of panoramic landscapes (one of which is

featured above). He says: 'I have always had an affinity with the panoramic format; I find it correlates a much more natural way of observing the world and recording the beauty of the Scottish landscape.'
slpoty.co.uk

2 Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015

» Natural History Museum, London

» 16 October to 10 April 2016
Successful images from this year's competition go on show at the Natural History Museum this autumn, before touring the UK. Exhibited on backlit panels, the 100 images illustrate the

majesty and vulnerability of life on our planet. To see some of our favourite photos from the competition, turn to page 66.
nhm.ac.uk

3 Sea Change

» The Gates Art Centre, Cardiff

» 28 October to 20 November

A thought-provoking project exploring the changes in sea levels on the Severn Estuary. Merryn Thomas uses a combination of photographs, interviews and social science research from Cardiff University to explore the effects of climate change in and around the river Severn.
thegate.org.uk

4 Edgelands

» Museum of East Anglian Life, Suffolk

» To 31 March 2016

Photographer Tom Owens is fascinated with the buffer zones where urban and countryside areas meet, and with the official labelling of the UK's designated areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs). Featuring images captured from outside the boundaries of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB along the Shotley Peninsula, Owens' Edgelands project questions the notion of beauty in the countryside. Often working in morning or evening light, and using a mixture of large and



© Rosamund Macfarlane, UK



© Merryn Thomas

medium format cameras, Owens' colour images demonstrate his ability to seek out visual harmony. eastanglianlife.org.uk

5 Southern Light Stations

» The Photographers' Gallery, London

» To 10 January 2016

The Photographers' Gallery plays host to French artist Noémie Goudal's first solo UK show, Southern Light Stations. Consisting of previously unseen works, the exhibition highlights Goudal's interest in working with photography, film and installation to explore manmade interventions into the natural world. Her work draws upon myths, legends, religious symbolism and early scientific theories. thephotographersgallery.org



© Noémie Goudal

6 Insight Astronomy Photographer of the Year 2015

» Royal Observatory Greenwich, London

» To 23 December

Revealing the visually stunning wonders of our night sky, images from this year's Insight

Astronomy Photographer of the Year are on show at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich. The exhibition features winning and commended entries from the competition's eight categories, including Galaxies, Stars and Nebulae, Our Moon and Aurorae. rmg.co.uk

THRILLING ADVENTURE TALKS

Andy Kirkpatrick: Cold Mountain

» Various UK locations

» Dates to 26 February 2016

Following the success of last year's tour, British mountaineer Andy Kirkpatrick is back with more stories, adventures and experiences to share with you; he will recount his exhilarating expeditions to Antarctica, Alaska, Norway and Patagonia.

To see a full list of dates and venues, go to speakersfromtheedge.com



© Andy Kirkpatrick

Passion, Action, Inspiration

» Appleton Tower, Edinburgh

» 5 November

Three brothers pay homage to their late father in an inspiring two-hour talk. Recounting the adventures they embarked on together, Niall, Rory and Finn McCann remember trips to Australia, Antarctica, the Himalaya, Iceland, the Yukon, California and the Seychelles (to name a few) and remind us all to live life to its full potential. rsgs.org



© McCann Brothers

WILDLIFE EVENTS TO INSPIRE

North West Bird Watching Festival

» WWT Martin Mere, Lancashire

» 21 to 22 November

Make sure you don't miss this year's North West Bird Watching Festival. Highlights include a 4K-photography workshop with Panasonic, and inspiring talks from wildlife photographer Andy Rouse, Welsh nature expert Iolo Williams and acclaimed birdwatcher Mark Avery. Two-day passes cost £17 and can be purchased via the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust's website: wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/martin-mere/experience/north-west-bird-watching-festival.



© Andy Bunting

Wildlife Writing workshop

» RSPB Loch Leven Centre, Perth and Kinross

» 22 November, 10am-2pm

This four-hour writing workshop is a wonderful way for nature photographers to see their subject from a fresh perspective. After a tour of the birdlife, wildlife and landscapes of Loch Leven nature reserve in Kinross, author and poet Anita John will lead you through a range of creative exercises designed to get you writing. Tickets cost £12, or £10 for RSPB members, and booking is essential. To find out more, go to anitajohn.co.uk. rspb.org.uk



© Andy Hay

KENDAL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL THE HIGHLIGHTS

Kendal Mountain Festival is a four-day action-packed event right in the heart of the picturesque Lake District. Promoting mountain and adventure culture through a fantastic line-up of speakers, films and other events, there's plenty to get you excited about the outdoors. Here are just a few of the impressive talks taking place...



© Jeff Johnson

American adventurer **Tommy Caldwell** catapulted to fame last year after two amazing feats: free-climbing Yosemite's El Capitan Dawn Wall – the hardest big-wall free-route in the world – and completing the Fitz Traverse in Patagonia. Catch him talking about his experiences.

Tickets costs £12.50. Saturday 21 November 5-6.30pm

British adventurer **Leo Holding** talks about his latest project, to ascend the Mirror Wall – an unclimbed wall in Greenland. Following 12 nights on the wall, and battling sickness, bad weather and complex route problems, Leo and his team completed their goal. Featuring film excerpts and special guests, Leo's talk will get you fired up for an adventure.

Tickets cost £7.50. Sunday 22 November 3.30-5pm

Ben Moon raised the standards of top-end climbing in June after redpointing Rainshadow, a grade 9a ascent in Malham Cove, North Yorkshire, just days before his 49th birthday. In 1990 he was also the first person to climb Hubble – a grade 8c+ ascent in Raven Tor, Derbyshire. Ben will relive these epic experiences, as well as revealing how he balances his climbing with family life.

Tickets cost £12.50. Saturday 21 November, 1-2.30pm

If you get your kicks from pushing your performance to the limit then the **Endurance Session** is for you. The interviews with top endurance athletes include Nicky Spinks, the inspirational long distance runner who completed the gruelling Bob Graham Round, the Ramsay Round and the Paddy Buckley Round each in under 20 hours, and Sean Conway, the first person to swim the length of Great Britain, from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Tickets cost £12.50. Friday 20 November, 4.30-7pm

Kendal Mountain Festival

Riverside Centre, Cumbria

19 to 22 November

All events are individually ticketed except the film screenings; day passes range from £20.50 to £27 and allow you to watch films morning, noon and night. Find out more at mountainfest.co.uk.



Your letters

Write to us! We love getting your views and responses; email claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

Early morning inspiration

I have been into photography for many years and always looked forward to family holidays in Cornwall, where I would get up ridiculously early and head to the nearest coast path or beach to photograph the sunrise. I remember one morning happily snapping away at a beautiful purple sky, the sun bursting like a flame from the horizon and lighting the heavy cloud. Only when I finished and turned around did I see what this amazing purple hued light was doing to the beach behind me (by which time I had run out of film!). It was a lesson learned about keeping your eyes and mind open all the time and not focusing on just one thing.

Since then, life kind of took over, and the serious landscape photography took a back seat. Recently, however, a family holiday to Guernsey allowed me to get back into the saddle. At the same time, your very helpful article on dawn and sunrise photography was published (OP195), which has provided plenty of inspiration and saw me diligently checking maps, Google and sunrise

prediction apps to plan which locations to visit. I now look forward to lots more early mornings, and will certainly be sending in my recent pictures to the 'If you only do one thing this month... dawn and sunrise' reader challenge. Thank you, OP, for helping to re-inspire my photography!

Andrew Critchell, via email



above James Grant's article in the September 2015 issue of OP, on how to shoot dawn and sunrise.

Processing and printing large format photographs

I read with interest the article about large format photography, by Richard Childs, in the October issue of *Outdoor Photography* (OP197). It was a good article, as far as it went. I think there is scope for a second part, which could cover the options for using the transparency or negative that results from shooting with a large-format camera.

I am thinking about either darkroom work, printing with a 5x4 enlarger (or do people just make contact prints?); or Lightroom work – is it common to scan the transparencies oneself and, if so, with what? Is it preferable to get a lab to do it? What are the implications of (presumably) quite large file sizes, and what are the costs involved?

John Fryatt, Northamptonshire

Ed's comment Thank you for your feedback, John – we are going to look into the idea of running a *Quick Guide on processing and printing large format images*. In the meantime we'd love to hear from anyone else who would find such a feature helpful, and what you'd like to see covered.

Workshops – do your research!

I am getting really annoyed about the lack of support on photo workshops. After I returned home from one a couple of years ago, during which I had no support, I spotted some photos in a national newspaper taken by the workshop leader, which I know were taken on the same trip – I was mad!

There are so many photographic experiences on offer – tutorials, courses, photo holidays, one-to-ones – that some

basic guidelines would be very helpful in choosing the most appropriate. Perhaps there are differences in what is termed a workshop and what is described as a holiday, for example.

Here are some of the points that I think need to be addressed clearly:

- Will the leader take his or her own photos? How much of their time will be devoted to helping clients out in the field? Will they use their photos for financial purposes after the workshop?
- If the leader does take images, will they be shown to the group to discuss the ideas behind them?
- Is there a base-level of experience necessary to get the most out of the workshop?
- Will each participant be asked about their objectives prior to the workshop, and will there be an evaluation at the end?
- Will there be critique sessions and/or will each client's images be assessed in the field?
- Will there be talks in the evening?
- How will the leader assist participants and promote development and inspiration? To me, this is a major feature of a workshop.
- Will there be daily critiques at the end of the day, and individual help at least once a day in the field?
- Will the leader do more than just rely on individuals asking for assistance? I feel this is important, as 'you don't know what you don't know', and asking the right questions is not always easy.
- If there is more than one person leading the workshop, will the group be split up according to their interests or experience?
- How are health and safety issues addressed? This may seem a bit over the top, but it is relevant in certain situations.

Should there be a set of standardised guidelines to help people get the best out of photographic workshops and courses? I would be interested to hear the views of other OP readers.

Anne Pennington-George, via email

November's letter of the month winner, Andrew Critchell, receives a Samsung 128GB MicroSD EVO memory card with adapter, worth £93.99

Launched earlier this year, the Samsung 128GB MicroSD EVO memory card with adapter has a transfer speed of up to 48MB/s. The cards can be used in a range of devices, can survive for up to 20 hours in seawater and are protected from damage caused by airport x-ray machines.

samsung.com



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IN CONVERSATION WITH

Bernhard Edmaier

Twenty years ago former geologist Bernhard Edmaier changed career to become an aerial landscape photographer. With books such as 'Earthsong' and 'Earth on Fire' under his belt, he is recognised as one of the masters of the art. Here, he discusses his latest project, Water...

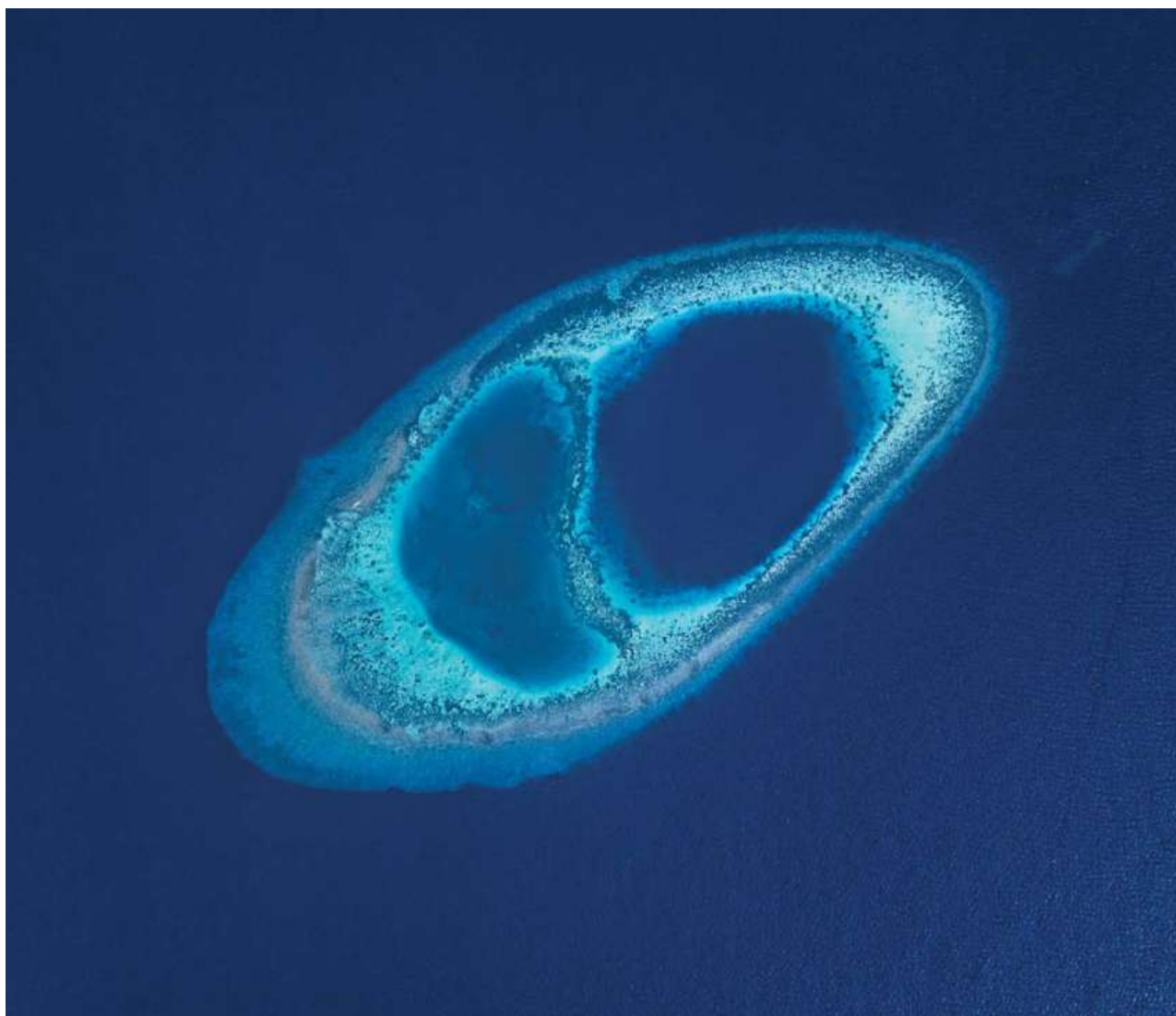
Interview by Nick Smith



above Maly Semyachik, Kamchatka, Russia. *right* Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory, Australia.







left Thjorsa, Iceland. above Ari Atoll, Maldives.

Bernhard Edmaier's CV presents something a little out of the ordinary for a photographer. Scrolling down the list of his achievements, it seems that the fifty-something German started out in the professional world as a civil engineer and geologist, among other things blasting tunnels through mountains. But at some point, around two decades ago, his creative muse was sidetracked down the more constructive path of aerial landscape photography: a job he has been working on ever since. Today he photographs the forms, structures and colours of the Earth from helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. His previous publications include the hugely successful coffee-table monographs *Earthsong*, *Earth on Fire* and *Earth*. These three titles alone, with their uniting thread of the word 'Earth', combine to tell the story of a geologist with a passion for large-scale geomorphological landscapes, who has exchanged the theodolite for the camera.

His latest book and exhibition, however, has shifted in tone and emphasis from solid matter to the liquid form. *Water* is an immense project that aims to show the physical effect the constantly moving mass of oceans and rivers has on the external geophysical aspect of the planet we all live on. No pun intended, but his monolithic tome is nothing less than a hymn to the landscape-changing forces that shape the Earth.

Dreamlike, intensely colourful and often abstract images of water in all its forms combine to show not just a geologist's obsession with the surface of the Earth, but also a subtle artistic interpretation of natural beauty. Rivers, streams, deltas and floodplains; coastlines and estuaries; and glaciers, clouds and spray are the vocabulary of a project that has taken Edmaier around the world for the past decade. But it's not just the beauty of the Earth that captivates the photographer: on every page there is an implicit warning about the way in which water redistributes itself as a result of global warming and climate change.

Edmaier admits that he is not fluent in English, but as we talk, it becomes clear that the true eloquence of what he does is in the images themselves. Nearly all of the photographs in *Water* are taken from the air: the aerial idiom is one that he thinks is critical in representing the world from a fresh perspective. Quite apart from being 'immense fun to fly over the landscape', from the geological point of view, the aerial aspect for Edmaier is the one with which he can most effectively tell the narrative of the landscape. 'When it comes to large structures such as mountain ranges, it is much better to see them from the air than from the ground. So it's a perfectly reasonable thing to get airborne and take images from above.'





left Eyjafjallajökull, Iceland. above Lagunas de Cotacotani, Chile.

One of the reasons why geologists use aerial surveys and maps is because it is much easier to understand the story of the Earth when it is seen from above. It also seems so much more beautiful when seen from the air.'

It is this combination of scientific observation and artistic vision that forms the cornerstone of Edmaier's work. 'When I first started out in aerial photography I focused more on the documentary style. But over the years there has been a development in the way I work and see things, which means that I now concentrate perhaps more on abstract imagery. What I do now is to try to pick out aesthetically interesting elements in my work. It was a natural development for me to turn to taking images of water from above, but it was something that came about slowly, maybe starting 10 to 12 years ago. Even when I was working on my Earth projects, I was continually looking at how water changes the surface geology of the planet.' Change is the underpinning theme for the photographer who explains that part of the fascination comes from 'water being the source for all life. All organisms need water, we know that. But we don't really get to see many images, or read many books, about how water is remodelling the Earth. It became an obvious thing to concentrate on water as the dominant landscape-shaping force.'

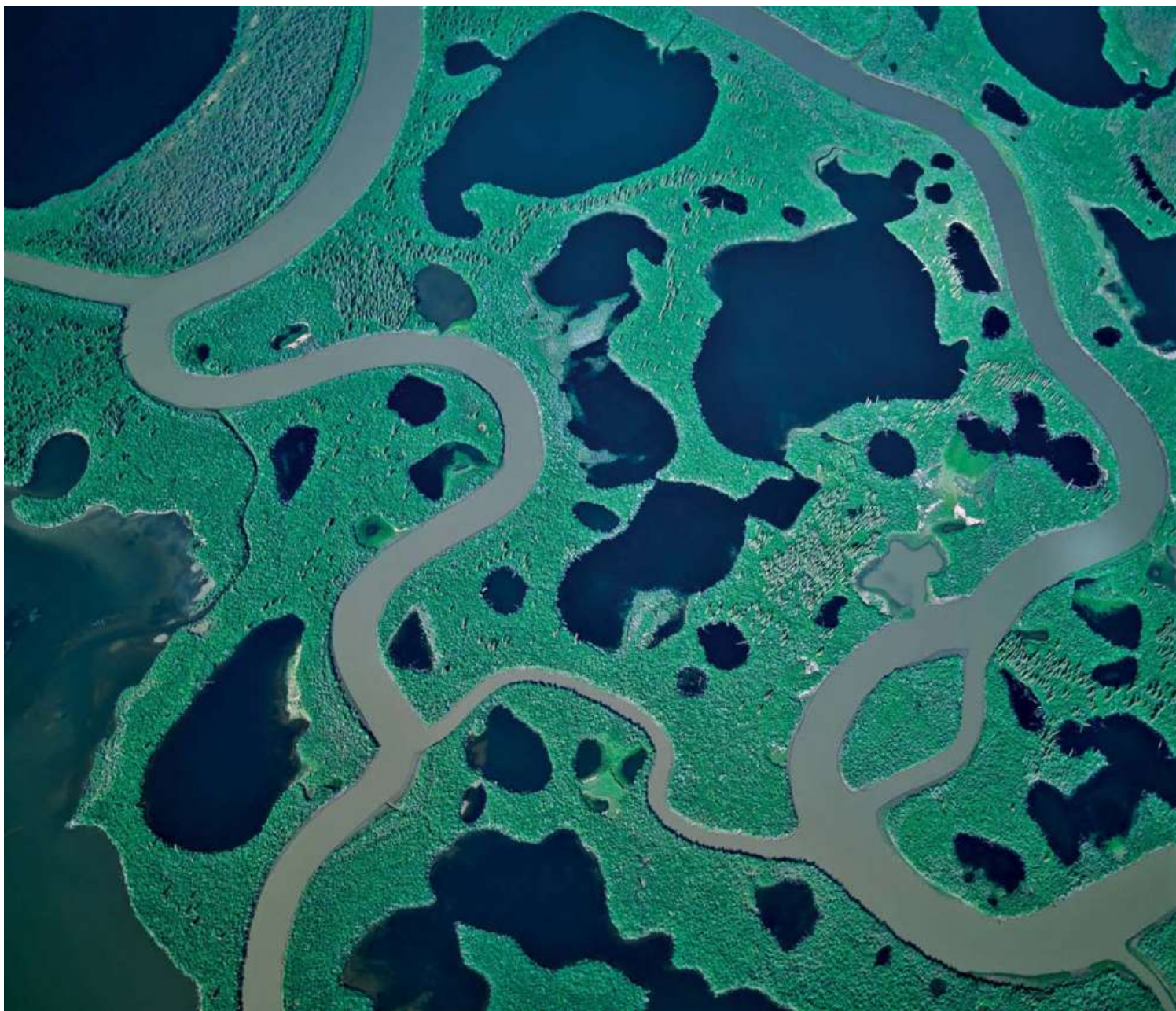
I put it to Edmaier that the transformation from geologist to photographer is not the most conventional of career trajectories. But he explains that he was always interested in photography even when he was an engineer on tunnelling

projects. 'I constantly had one eye on interesting geological features from the photographic perspective as well as the geological, and I was always interested in learning how to take professional-level photographs of such features.' But it wasn't until two decades ago that Edmaier took the plunge and decided to leave the comparatively lucrative world of drilling big holes in mountains in favour of taking pictures of them. 'It was a difficult decision to change career because of the way the finances work. As a geophysicist, you can have quite a profitable time, and by comparison, to set off as a freelance photographer is very hard.' That is especially so in the world of aerial photography, where getting started is a little more complex than simply taking a camera out into the field. As Edmaier explains: first and foremost you need access to an aircraft – either fixed-wing or helicopter – as well as a backup team and the budget to go with it.

Looking at it objectively, the photographer says that he is working with 'quite a strange business model, where I have had to reinvest my previous salaries into new creative projects. Also, of course, it is quite difficult to make a living from selling photographs into the print media these days. But I was fortunate to be able to shoot for *National Geographic* and *Geo* magazines. But even with magazines such as these, their budgets today are not as good as they were 10 years ago. What this means is that nowadays, to make the business work, I have to sell more prints. I am definitely not rich, but it works somehow.'

There are 220 photographs in *Water*, and they are all

>



above Mackenzie Delta, Canada.

uniformly excellent. To achieve consistency of output such as this requires not just a high level of technical and artistic skill, but also time. Edmaier has invested a decade of his life on the project, during which he has racked up several hundred hours in fixed-wing light aircraft and helicopters, while visiting in the region of 40 countries. Background planning is painstakingly meticulous. Working with his wife – science writer and geologist Angelika Jung-Hüttl – Edmaier's main concern is to find the right locations for his work. 'Then we do a lot of research with satellite images. Google Earth isn't very helpful to us in places such as Greenland because of the lack of resolution. But we do a lot of research with scientists who help us with maps and so on. There is a lot of preparation for each journey.'

Reflecting on the end of the *Water* project, Edmaier is not entirely convinced that he has achieved what he set out to do. This isn't false modesty: rather it is the objective opinion of

a perfectionist. 'Maybe I am a difficult character in this respect, but I'm not always happy with the images I have taken. These photographs are part of a difficult process. You can get quite close to being satisfied with the outcome, but never completely.' But he is pleased to be able to work in an area that draws attention to the environmental issue of climate change. 'Global warming is heavily influencing the water cycle. It's not just the melting of the polar ice, but the thawing of the permafrost: all this is heavily affected by global warming. The hydrological cycle is a closed system, and so the water can't escape. But it does get redistributed and I hope that the images in my book will help the reader to understand the forces involved. Ultimately, I try to get the interest of the readers by presenting them with photographs that are beautiful.'

To see more of Bernhard Edmaier's work, visit bernhard-edmaier.de.

GET THE BOOK!

Water is available now (Prestel, 978-3791381657, hardback, £45).





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Digital capture has changed the definition of correct exposure. Pete Bridgwood explores his own approach to getting the right data in the field to be able to maximise the final image

In the days before the digital revolution, photographers shooting in colour chose their film depending on the kind of style they wanted to achieve in their final image. Creative choices were extremely limited compared to the almost infinite possibilities we now enjoy. Most professionals would send their films to processing laboratories, and very few would develop their own prints when working in colour; creative control effectively ended with the click of the shutter. Contrast this with the vast, unlimited, perpetual and infinitely adjustable control we have in the digital realm; it almost seems too good to be true. If we consider the relative creative contributions of on-location activities and post-processing to our final image, no doubt each of us would have different answers. As a gross generalisation, my own philosophy is that image capture and image processing each contribute 50%, but despite our myriad different

opinions, none of us can ignore the freedom facilitated by the digital process; it has necessitated a different approach from the ways of the old world.

My on-location intention has always been to capture perfect data. Despite the forgiving nature of my X-trans sensor, I still enjoy the discipline of getting everything right in-camera. Getting it right, for me, means optimising the quality of the data in the Raw file, rather than creating an authentic representation of the scene. A graduated filter helps me to pull back the exposure in the sky, and my objective during image capture is to create a Raw file with a relatively narrow dynamic range. Local balancing of exposure and contrast between various elements can then be fine-tuned in post-processing. Once I have chosen the most appropriate neutral density graduated filter, my thoughts turn to the optimal strength of

required neutral density filter to homogeneously darken the scene and force a longer exposure. The dynamic elements of any scene always have an optimal exposure to render them with a perfect degree of blur and emphasise the passage of time in a way that enlivens or dynamises the image most effectively.

Once the image is imported into Lightroom, if a wideangle lens has been used, I will sometimes introduce the graduated filter tool from one side to balance the exposure of the left and right sides of the scene. I often also enjoy darkening a narrow band of foreground and a wider band of sky, to visually encapsulate the attention of the viewer; a subtle degree of vignette helps here too.

*above Southwold, Suffolk.
Fujifilm X-T1 with XF 10-24mm f/4 R OIS lens
at 14mm, ISO 500, 25sec at f/11, Lee Seven5
System: Big Stopper, polariser, 2-stop ND grad*



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DARK AND DRAMATIC

Norman McCloskey's guide to capturing powerful images in low light

Explore the beauty of low light

As the days draw in, the accessibility of low light conditions increases. Norman McCloskey guides us through making the most of this very special time of year for outdoor photographers

For most of us, our first forays into landscape photography will have been tentative steps in the bright light of day, as we came to terms with exposure, composition and other technical bits. As you progress, your technical knowledge expands and so does the range of light you begin to work in. For me, over the course of the last 23 years, this has led to a point of seeking out and working in light conditions that are far removed from where I first began. Working in low light conditions

offers far more interesting and dynamic opportunities, which can result in more dramatic images. If this is done consistently it can result in the emergence of a distinctive style and theme to your images. Working in low light isn't just about nighttime and astrophotography – that's a whole area of focus in itself. Here we will look at ways to make images in conditions where previously you have simply been waiting for the main light show, or maybe have packed up the gear and left thinking that the light is finished.



WHY WORK IN THE DARK?

Shooting in low light doesn't necessarily mean there has to be very little light. It's better to think of it in terms of a different quality of light available to you. As a photographer, you are on a journey that hopefully will continue for a very long time, and see you evolve to take not just better pictures but different pictures. Landscape photographers will quite happily travel to discover new locations to work in, but perhaps the easiest and most important journey you'll make is the one to discover new light

to work with. The creative challenges presented by changing the conditions you normally work in can often be daunting, but are also hugely rewarding. If you have found yourself stuck in a bit of a rut or feel you're simply not developing as a photographer, it's a great thing to force a change by heading out on days and at times that you may have not done before. Your comfort zone is not the place where you will grow your creativity, and tackling tricky lighting conditions will definitely add a new dynamic to your portfolio.

above
MacGillycuddy's Reeks in mist, County Kerry.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 24mm f/3.5 lens, ISO 100, 1/13sec at f/10

THE LOWDOWN ON LOW LIGHT

In landscape photography the overwhelming low light subject matter tends to be sunrises and sunsets, which can provide a very rich and dramatic colour palette.

Photographing the landscape just before or as the sun comes up or sets can be an exhilarating and rewarding experience, not least because it's wonderful to witness the displays of colour that are present and make images that have a certain wow factor. I find, however, that it's very easy to overdo the pink skies and dramatic beams of light and your work can become quite limited in scope. Semi-overcast mornings and evenings can provide lighting that is equally as dramatic, and as long as you can accentuate the right elements these can result in images that are both more personal and powerful.

Shots of clear blue skies and fluffy clouds are not going to tell us much about the photographer or, indeed, the place itself, as that type of imagery is so ingrained in our minds as 'normal' that we don't engage much when presented with such scenes. But faced with a darker, brooding image of the Isle of Skye or Iceland, for example, we have a more compelling and contextual experience that provides real insight into the location and the person who took the photograph.



above Sleah Head, County Kerry. Canon EOS 1DX with 70-200mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 50, 8sec at f/9

below Ladies View, County Kerry. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 16-35mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 50, 6sec, f/11, 0.6 ND grad



WHEN TO SHOOT LOW LIGHT

The half an hour before and after sunrise and sunset is a good starting point, but as you progress you can push this out as much as you can, to an hour and beyond. Personally I find heading out into the landscape in the darkness and witnessing the coming light offers the greatest scope to make impactful images. Having met many amateur photographers in my gallery during the last year, the early morning seems to be the thing that many struggle with, yet it is probably the one time of day that will propel your photography on to a new level. The quality of light in the early mornings is spectacular, and the variance in atmospheric conditions means you can be treated to low-lying fog or mist, dew on foliage, and cloud inversions – all of which add mood to your images.

Low light shooting is not, however, just about dawn and dusk. At our northern latitudes from late autumn to early spring we can experience very low light conditions during normal daylight hours. Overcast days with bad weather shouldn't be written off. In fact, I have begun to embrace these days and the challenges they present more and more, and am now being rewarded with work I'm very happy with.



above **Glenbeg Lake, County Cork.**
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 17mm
f/4 lens, ISO 50, 1/8sec at f/16,
0.9 ND grad

below **Muckross Lake, County Kerry.**
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E
24mm f/3.5 lens, 0.8sec at f/16,
ISO 100, 0.6 ND grad

opposite (top) **Brandon Bay, County Kerry.** Canon EOS 5D MkIII with
16–35mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 200,
1/40sec at f/14

opposite (bottom) **'Mountain Light'.**
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70–200mm
f/2.8 lens, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/5.6







GOOD LOW LIGHT SUBJECTS

Just about any type of outdoor scene, from cityscapes to landscapes and seascapes, is suitable to render in low light conditions. The essential thing to consider is how the light conditions are going to shape what types of images you attempt to create. If you are inland and away from water, a low-contrast wideangle landscape without any clearly defined structures or shapes is not going to have much impact. Being able to frame a shot with a silhouetted tree, rock formation or building will make the image work much better and you can use the sky for added drama. It is crucial to look closely at how the available light is falling on your subject both in the background and foreground. It is also good to look for subjects that are going to change in their appearance as the light becomes more angular.

Water is perhaps the most effective element you can introduce into low light situations, as it provides a variety of options for the type of image you can make. Longer exposures allow for the introduction of blurred movement and can open up lots of creative possibilities. Stretches of water or tidal areas will often reflect the remaining light in a dark scene and create interesting contrast – keep an eye out, in particular, for strong lines in tidal flows. Positioning your camera as low to the ground as possible allows you to maximise the effect of the reflected light in your image.



left, from top Doo Lough, County Mayo. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 24mm f/3.5 lens, ISO 100, 2sec at f/9.5, 0.6 ND grad

Caragh Lake, County Kerry. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 24mm f/3.5 lens, ISO 50, 184sec at f/11, Lee Big Stopper, 0.6 ND grad

Lough Leane, County Kerry. Canon EOS 1 DX with EF 16-35mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 100, 198sec at f/11, Lee Big Stopper



LOW LIGHT PRACTICALITIES

» Your primary consideration when taking images in low light conditions should be keeping yourself and your gear safe. If photographing alone, always let someone know where you will be and approximately what time you'll be back. Familiarise yourself with the location either the day or evening before, and try to avoid heading off into unfamiliar terrain, especially on to high ground, in the dark or when the light is fading. It's essential to have a torch, both for getting about and using your camera and lenses; a head torch is the best option here.

» Know where all your gear is in your bag, and keep what you bring to a minimum so you can easily reach in and select the required lens or filter. I tend to bring along a belt with pouches so I can change lenses and filters quickly without having to drop down to my bag.

» Set up your camera prior to heading out, making sure to shoot in Raw with the ISO set at 100 or 200 (avoid ISO 50 unless you need it for intentional slow shutter speeds). If you're waiting for the weather to clear or light to improve, use the time to double check everything, including making sure that your filters and lenses are clean. Spare camera batteries are important too, especially as the longer exposures you need in low light tend to drain more energy.



ON HIGHER GROUND

One of the most rewarding aspects of low light photography can be camping out and experiencing the fading light of the day, the thrill of the dark sky and the anticipation of the coming morning. Wild camping is a tricky business and choosing a good weather window isn't easy, but it's almost always worth it. I have very few successful images that were taken just 100 metres from the car and didn't involve a lot of effort. Hiking into the wilds with all your camping and camera gear will certainly test you, but I've almost always been rewarded for the effort with a strong image. I'm fortunate to live in a very mountainous area that I know quite well, so I choose to camp out alone. But that's not for everyone, so either go with someone who's equally keen or take the opportunity to be guided professionally.

Camping out tips

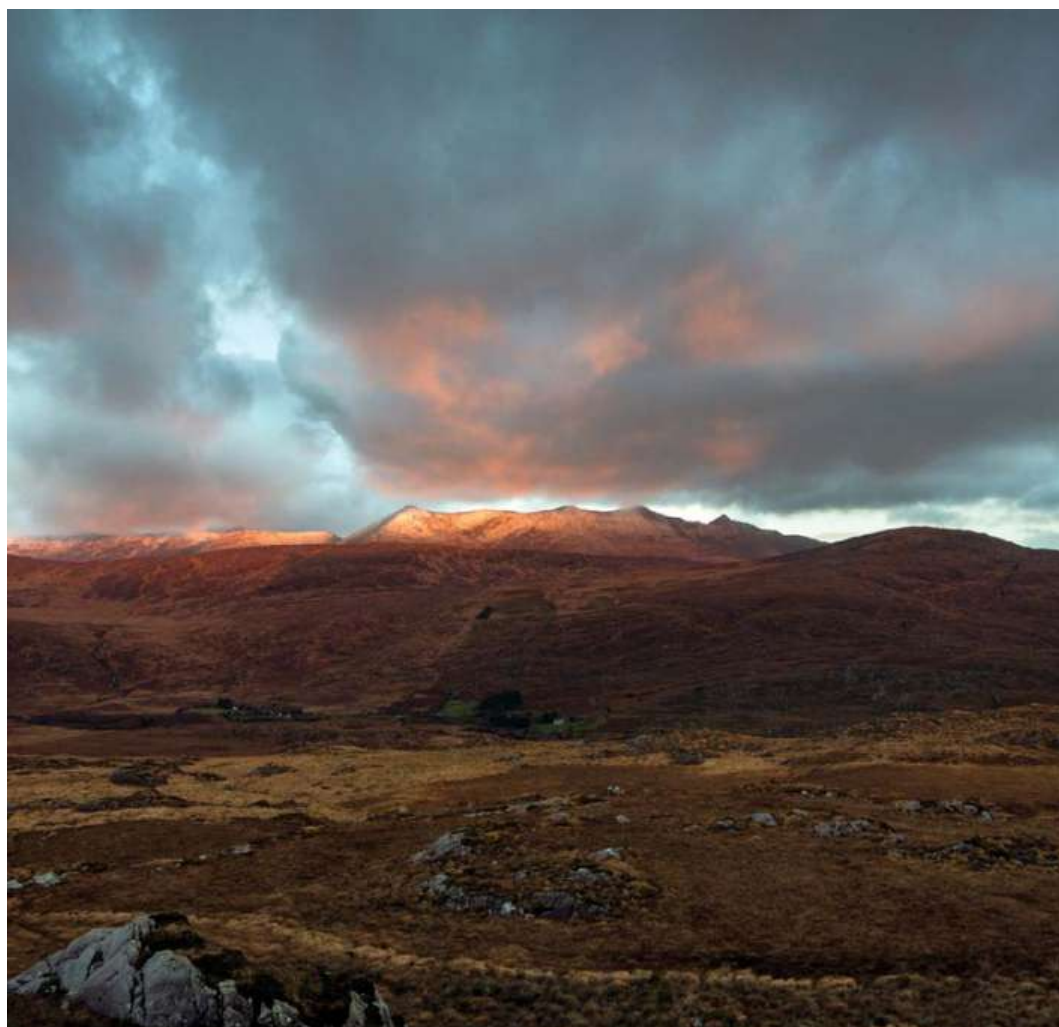


Study maps well in advance and plan your route carefully, building in contingency escape routes. Always do a recce and select a spot suitable for camping that is not too exposed. Google Earth and online tools such as the Photographer's Ephemeris will help you plan where the sun and moon will rise and set. I often eliminate the need to bring cooking gear by leaving in the evening after a good meal, which keeps me going for the hike, topping that up with snacks and then having a simple breakfast before descending the next morning. I'm no Bear Grylls and my priority is to photograph, so once the good light is gone in the morning it's straight back down to the car and home.

*left (top) Dun Briste, County Mayo.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 24mm
f/3.5 lens, ISO 100, 155sec at f/3.5*

*left (bottom) Lough Brin, County Kerry.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 24mm
f/3.5 lens, ISO 50, 0.3sec at f/16*





SIMPLIFY YOUR WORKFLOW

Light fades fast in the evenings and its qualities alter rapidly in the early hours. On overcast days the changes can often be imperceptible, but may vary sharply from one moment to the next depending on the density of cloud cover. The last things I want to be thinking about in these lighting conditions are technical settings. I simplify the process as much as much possible to ensure my mind is focused on the creative process. Practice making adjustments to your camera settings – even if you are not out in the field – until they are second nature.

I almost always shoot in manual mode, starting off with a standard setting of: ISO 100, Auto White Balance and an aperture of f/8 or f/11. Live view works well in low light too. I will fire off a test and work from there – sometimes not changing much at all apart from my composition and occasionally the lens and filters.

Working in low light is perhaps the only time I will have the histogram visible on the LCD display when making an exposure. It helps ensure that I don't clip my highlights, which can easily happen when metering in my default mode of evaluative. When using neutral density filters you can spend a lot of time calculating your exposure and thinking about which settings to use. I very quickly and approximately set up my shot and then take a frame at a roughly guessed exposure, with the aperture opened right up to check focus and composition.

above and below MacGillycuddy's Reeks, County Kerry. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with TS-E 24mm f/3.5 lens, ISO 100, 0.3sec at f/11, 0.6 ND grad



STEPS TO SUCCESS

- 1 Try to envisage the types of images you'd like to make and set off with them in mind.
- 2 Wear layered clothing; you will be more comfortable and less distracted by the elements. Good boots and Gore-Tex outer layers will prolong the time you can spend outside in all conditions.
- 3 Don't skimp when it comes to buying a tripod; invest in a strong one, preferably made from carbon fibre to cut down on weight. I use a ball head for ease of use, with a spare quick release plate on a second body, if needed.
- 4 If you have invested in a slot-in neutral density filter such as a Big Stopper, consider permanently keeping it in its own holder to simplify things when taking it on and off in low light.
- 5 When working in coastal areas, read and understand the tide tables. Look for sandy stretches with rivers or outflows that can carve out interesting lines and patterns.
- 6 Avoid locations that may have roads with traffic in the distance, as the light trails from the vehicles may spoil your shot.
- 7 Take more than a casual glance at the weather forecast and understand what all the likely conditions will mean, and plan for them. Forecasts are not always right, either, so go prepared for all possible conditions.
- 8 Experiment with exposure times. For moving subjects the differences can be pronounced, plus on longer exposures small areas that you may not have noticed in your composition will appear with more light.
- 9 De-clutter your LCD screen, and make your exposure with nothing but the scene itself visible so that you can spot distracting elements at the edges.
- 10 Don't pack up your gear too quickly thinking the light is gone. Often the residual light is perfect to work with, especially with modern digital cameras.

TAKE PART! Enter our 'low light' photography competition – turn to page 111 for details

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QUICK GUIDE TO...

Shooting reflections

Including a reflection in the frame is a great way of creating dynamic landscape images. **Craig Roberts** gets close to the water's edge to show you how to photograph them

Wherever there is water in the landscape, there's the potential to add a reflection to your composition. Mirroring the landscape above the surface of the water can give your image a pleasing symmetry, creating a sense of calm and clarity. You obviously need a strong main subject to reflect in your chosen body of water, although this can also take the form of a colourful sky or a dramatic cloudscape.

Reflections can be used for creativity or to add another layer of interest and a sense of depth. You can capture reflections in the largest lake or the smallest puddle. Your reflection can be anything from the sky to a mountain, building, boat or line of trees. You can shoot a vast landscape scene mirrored in the water in the foreground or the smallest abstract details, such as reeds or rocks on the water's edge, where you can eliminate the sky completely from your shot. In overcast conditions, when there is little or no breeze, abstract reflection images are possible.

HOW TO SHOOT REFLECTIONS

» Still, windless weather will give you the best and sharpest reflections, so picking the right day is key. Early morning shoots, especially before sunrise, are good, as the rising sun can bring a slight breeze that will create movement on the water's surface.

» Be careful not to upset the water's calm surface by accidentally placing the tripod leg or your own foot in the water; this will cause a ripple that can break the reflection several metres ahead of you. Get to a low angle so you can use a still area of water closer to the shore.

» Get close to the water's edge and use a wideangle lens to frame your composition. Pay attention to the symmetry within the view. If the reflection matches the view above the water perfectly, try framing the shot with the horizon across the centre of the image. Alternatively, place the horizon a third of the way down from the top of the frame.

» Despite its reflective qualities, water absorbs light, and therefore you may need to use a graduated ND filter to even up your exposure.

ESSENTIAL TIPS

- 1 Sheltered water and areas of water with a shore all the way round usually work best. You can get reflections off rivers, but their flow can often prevent this.
- 2 Reflections at the coast usually come in the form of the pools of water left behind at low tide. On sandy shores the whole beach can become reflective, but sometimes you will be left with just a small pool. A low viewpoint, shooting with a wideangle lens, will make the most of these.
- 3 Harbours are also good places to shoot reflections, especially those with colourful fishing boats; even rippled water can reflect their vibrant colours.
- 4 A polarising filter can be used to enhance a reflection. While they are often used to remove reflections, at the right angle they can also be used to reduce glare, allowing the reflection to be revealed.
- 5 If the breeze picks up and your reflection is lost in the ripples, consider using a strong ND filter to smooth out the water. A six or 10-stop ND can be used to extend your exposure to around 30 seconds, revealing the reflection once again.
- 6 If you're shooting a symmetrical reflection, ensure you get your horizon nice and straight. Use a hot shoe spirit level if your camera doesn't have a built-in level guide, and line up the horizon. Mounting your camera on a sturdy tripod helps with this technique.



opposite Hawes End jetty, Derwent Water, Cumbria. *Mamiya RZ67 with 50mm lens, Fuji Velvia, 1/2sec at f/16, 0.6 ND grad*

above Harbour reflections, Mevagissey, Cornwall. *Canon T90 with 70-200mm lens, Fuji Velvia 100, 1/250sec at f/11*

below Salford Quays. *Olympus OM-D E-M1 with 12-40mm lens at 13mm, ISO 100, 13sec at f/11, Big Stopper, 0.6 ND grad*

URBAN REFLECTIONS

Urban landscapes also provide some great opportunities for capturing reflections. The abundance of glass in modern buildings provides reflections away from water – even cars can be used to reflect the surrounding environment. As well as any fountains or water features, your water source can come in the form of puddles on the pavement following heavy rainfall. Once night falls, it is often possible to capture bright, artificial lights in these pools of water.



Visual harmony

On her first visit to see the northern lights, Claire Carter is swept off her feet by one of the greatest natural spectacles on the planet. Like all good things in life, it left her wanting more

My camera and I have had many adventures together but there is one occasion that is indelibly burnt into both my sensor and brain. So much so I don't need the pictures to recall the event. I can close my eyes and play it back in full technicolour. A moment that still makes my heart sing.

I had travelled to Reykjavik, picked up a car and travelled east for six hours to be standing in the pitch black at midnight; aurora hunting. I just needed some luck to make the weather and cosmic rays converge in time and space. The stars were out, so I knew the clouds were being kind. I was checking the screen on my camera, which confirmed that it was recording a faint green light in the sky, when suddenly the heavens exploded with green light. It flooded

down on me and it was no longer dark. Then, as quickly as it had started, it stopped.

This was just the prelude, the light orchestra warming up. Gracefully a triple arch emerged that stretched for 180 degrees from east to west. It grew in intensity. I stopped taking photographs and stood, weeping. Such beauty could not be captured, it had to be experienced.

Slowly the arches began to collapse into themselves, lyre-shaped and reflected in the frozen lake. This signalled the dancing to begin, with a symphony of colours ranging from red to pink, blue to purple, mixed with vivid greens. After such a performance does one applaud? No, like after any sacred moment silence is more fitting.

Once seen, I needed another fix. I have since travelled to Iceland and Norway many times in

order to experience this thrill again. It isn't an easy addiction, coping with the intense cold and fatigue, but such awe-inspiring beauty is worth the effort. Viewing photographs is no substitute for the actuality of an aurora, as the sheer scale and majesty is hard to convey in one frame. In what I consider to be the visual equivalent of music, it requires the full movement to make sense but each moment strikes a resonance that makes the heart quicken.

Every aurora is unique, and in reality, like any good concert, you really have to be there to appreciate the beauty of the performance. As a photographer I challenge myself to compose a composition that in some way reflects the visual reality, but I am happy for this to be my unfinished symphony. Who wants a finale when the endeavour is so breathtaking?





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Andy Habin was an expert & excellent guide for the Big Tides tour, combining local knowledge with deep technical and practical experience. He adapted the days to cater to what our small group was most interested in, which was much appreciated. His knowledge of the island also really helped when coping with the varied weather. The highlight of the trip was definitely the RIB trip out to Les Ecrehoux for sunset and high tide - wonderful.

David Gulland. June 2015



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Many happy returns

During a return visit to India's enchanting Ladakh region, Paul Harris reflects on the value of exploring places in depth, and concludes that such an approach can be much more rewarding than simply expanding geographical horizons

The overnight rain was relentless; big fat drops hammering on the tent fabric. It was a great sound, almost musical, but it didn't bode well for the following morning's hoped-for photography in the high altitude mountain desert surrounding Lake Tso Moriri, close to the border with Tibet. The rain was highly unseasonal and just plain wrong. But as any good Buddhist will tell you – and some of them did – it's all part of life's rich tapestry. As the hammering died away after dawn, the air began to fill with the sound of clashing cymbals, blaring horns and the eerie rumble of deep voices echoing across the low rooftops of Korzok village. This jarring and joyous cacophony heralded the start of the Korzok Gustor Festival, one of Ladakh's colourful spiritual celebrations.

The sounds were both familiar and alien, giving a sense of déjà vu when





you are half awake, half asleep. Part of this I'm sure was due to the slow delirium associated with acclimatisation now that we had left the Indus Valley, climbed over the Tanglang La Pass on to the Himalayan plateau at almost 4,600m. Mostly, however, it was down to the fact that I resolutely set my mind on returning to this visually beguiling part of India. It's nearly 15 years since I took the spectacular flight from monsoonal Delhi into the parched heart of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I wasn't sure what to expect. Its northern and western borders remained politically sensitive and periodically volatile, but in many ways life along the Indus and up in mountain villages had changed little. India as a whole is a paradox; economically on the move but still hanging on to its ancient cultures and deeply diverse spirituality, many parts of which I have enjoyed experiencing and photographing for many years.

There are many reasons we are drawn back to places. Sometimes it's the combination of familiarity and the exotic or maybe the hope of discovering something different that you missed on the first, second or even third visit. Very early on in my career, I had the privilege of meeting Roland Michaud, a French photographer renowned for his images of central and southern Asia. He spoke of returning to India and Afghanistan time and time again, and even after multiple visits he still felt he had only scratched the surface. A master of quiet observation, photographer John Comino-James repeatedly stayed in the same, small 'casa particular' in a little known part of Havana, Cuba over a period of five years to create an intimate, self-assigned portrait of life, entitled 'A few streets, a few people'. He said of the project: 'It did not

occur to me to attempt serious photographs except in an area to which I might return frequently, an area with which I could become well acquainted...' The Italian photographer, Mario Giacomelli took a similar but perhaps more confrontational and graphic approach to his depiction of people and landscape, spending many months and years on one subject or location near his home on the Adriatic coast. His photographs of post-war Italian seminaries and gritty landscapes in the countryside of the Marche, sometimes using long-expired film to heighten the grain and contrast, remain testament to his artistry and lifelong preoccupations.

Giacomelli's time and commitment to his projects may not suit a lot of photographers preferring to expand their horizons geographically rather than internally, but it clearly shows the depths that can be achieved. I had been thinking along the same lines when I first visited the souks of Marrakech. Getting lost in the shadows and glare of these narrow ginnels was mesmerising. Elaborately carved doorways opened into dark corners of old caravanserais, stripped and hooded figures came out of nowhere gliding by on bicycles, and all around was the powerful aroma of wool dyers, tanneries and apothecaries. The soundtrack of metal workers moulding copper and brass never let up and I felt this was a place I could wander and photograph for several lifetimes.

I like to believe that many of us are now more often than not eschewing the notion of '1,000 places to see before you die' and returning to a place, theme or culture with deliberate intent and, as Henry David Thoreau would have it, 'to suck out all the marrow of life'.



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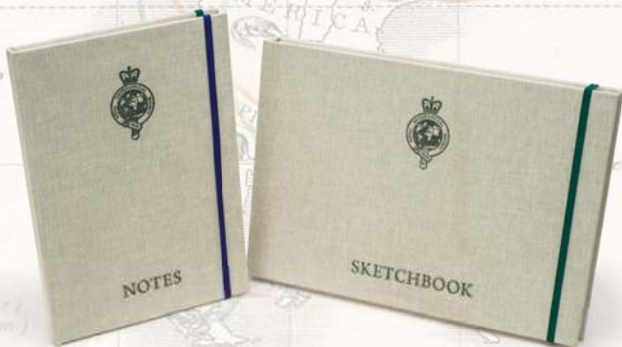
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Reflections in Kelly Hall Tarn by Andrew Ray

ACCESS RATING

These are based around an 'averagely fit' person. Below are loose guidelines to what the ratings mean (N.B. they are assigned by the author and not verified by OP. Walk distances are one-way only):



1/5 Easy access – you can pretty much get straight out of your car and quickly be at the viewpoint via good quality paths.



2/5 Some gentle walking – generally less than a half mile – is involved, which may be on mixed quality paths.



3/5 A walk of up to about two miles, over quite easy terrain.



4/5 Medium length hike – up to about four miles over mixed terrain, possibly with some quite steep gradients.



5/5 The most difficult access. Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

LOCATIONS GUIDE

46 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 Clogwyn y Garreg Gwynedd
- 2 Cannock Chase Staffordshire

50 Viewpoints

- 3 Bench Tor Devon
- 4 Falls of Bruar Perthshire
- 5 Unapool burn and Quinag Highland
- 6 Kilchoan ferry terminal Highland
- 7 Loch Torren Argyll
- 8 Kelly Hall Tarn Cumbria
- 9 Linn O'Dee Aberdeenshire
- 10 Grasmere Cumbria

Map plottings are approximate



Clogwyn y Garreg, Gwynedd

A glance in the rear-view mirror of his car led Graham Lawson to a scene with potential featuring one of Snowdonia's lesser-known peaks. It was only during a return visit later in the day that everything finally came together

right **Clogwyn y Garreg, Gwynedd.**
Nikon D600 with 70-200 f/4 lens at 95mm, ISO 100, 1/10sec at f/14, 0.9 ND grad, remote release, tripod; four-shot panorama, edited and stitched in Lightroom 6 then processed in Silver Efex 2

Snowdonia, as we all know, is an area rich in photographic potential; from lakes and mountains to forests and shorelines there is plenty to keep a photographer entertained and busy. It was for this reason that I took a trip there with a fellow photographer last autumn. Having based ourselves in a small cottage outside Beddgelert, we were in a fine position to explore and experience the variety of scenery on offer.

The weather was changeable over the five days we spent in the area, allowing us only brief glimpses of Mount Snowdon itself. The conditions did present some great photography opportunities for us though, with dramatic light, mist and hail all making appearances during our time there.

One morning, having spent sunrise photographing at Llynau Mymbyr, just outside the small village of Capel Curig, and then scouring our Ordnance Survey map at breakfast, we decided to jump in the car and have a drive around to explore some more. We were searching for good locations for sunrises and sunsets for the remainder of the trip and our wanderings took us out towards the west of the park, along the B4418. As we drove along, a scene that caught

my eye appeared in our rear-view mirror.

The view was of Clogwyn y Garreg, a small peak compared to some of the competition in the area but it drew my attention with its craggy ridges of rock and the fields and sheep below. While the location looked promising, the light wasn't quite right, with grey clouds overhead making things feel flat. So we decided to carry on down the road and revisit again on our way back later in the day.

When we returned, the conditions had improved, with rays of light appearing and disappearing through the clouds. I wandered on to a path a short distance from the road, set up my tripod and assessed the scene. The hill was still a fair distance from us so I selected a telephoto lens to fill the frame and bring some compression to the scene. With the light coming through the clouds, I used a three-stop ND grad to help balance the sky, and then checked the composition through live view on my camera.

Having taken a few shots I then adjusted my setup; I switched to portrait orientation, deciding to take a series of vertical images that I could stitch together later into a larger image. This would allow me to combine the compression I was seeking through using



5 miles from Beddgelert | 38 miles from Holyhead | ACCESS RATING

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there From Beddgelert, take the A4085 north until you reach Rhyd-Ddu. Take a left on to the B4418 and follow for a couple of miles, after which the peak will come into view. There are a number of lay-bys available to park in and a couple of footpath options for alternative views.

What to shoot The light on the hill and the weather passing over the peaks. Climb on to the east side for views of Llyn y Dywarchen lake.

Best time of day Options for both sunrise and sunset, depending on angle of view.

Nearest food/drink Cwellyn Arms, Rhyd-Ddu, LL54 6TL, 01766 890321, cwellynarms.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Prince Llewelyn Hotel, Stryd Smith, Beddgelert, LL55 4LT, 01766 890242, princellewelynhotel.com.

Ordnance Survey map LR 115

Nearby locations Mount Snowdon (10 miles); Llyn Llydaw (15 miles).

the telephoto lens while still capturing more of the scene. As I did this, the sun broke through and hit the side of the rocks on the hill, with the rest of the scene still in shadow. I quickly took a set of four images, taking care to make sure there was overlap on each one to help the stitching process later.

The morning after taking this image,

we found ourselves perched on the opposite side of the peak, overlooking the water of Llyn y Dywarchen at sunrise. There really is photographic opportunity wherever you look in Snowdonia.

Following my return home, quite a bit of time passed before I came to process these shots, as I had focused on some other scenes from the trip. I stitched the

Raw files together in Lightroom 6 and then, to highlight the light on the side of the peak and the contrast this gave with the rest of the scene and the sky, made some changes to the combined Raw file – applying lens corrections and adjusting the highlights, whites, shadows and black levels. I then transferred the file to Silver Efex 2 for the black & white conversion.





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Cannock Chase, Staffordshire

Shooting close to home, Ron Evans sets out one morning to capture autumn colour in the wonderful Cannock Chase and comes back with an unexpected and evocative image

Cannock Chase is the smallest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in mainland Britain, being just 27 square miles.

It is, however, the largest surviving area of lowland heathland in the Midlands. Inspired from childhood by long and warm summer holiday adventures exploring Cannock Chase, I have spent much time and effort over the subsequent years capturing this magical place in photographs.

Cannock Chase has no dramatic mountains, cliffs or fells and no winding rivers, stunning waterfalls or sparkling lakes. Its modest features include a few gentle hills and valleys and a network of footpaths that criss-cross the heathland. It has silver birch, Corsican pines, ancient oaks, and the lowland heath, all of which has been roamed for centuries by wild herds of fallow deer. It is a very special place, where the peace and quiet can allow visitors to put the brakes on an otherwise frenetic life and contemplate; it's a walker's paradise.

Castle Ring is the highest point on Cannock Chase, at 240m, and home to a 2,000-year-old iron age hill fort. On a sunny November day with hints of mist around, I walked from there to the Heart of England Way via a woodland footpath and country track that winds down a steep slope into a forested valley. I had my Canon EOS 5D MkII with me and was looking to capture images of late autumn, when it tends to have the finest light falling on the landscape.



This shot was unplanned, but I particularly enjoy taking images that are mainly instinctive. I came across a part of the Corsican pine forest that was edged with beautiful mature beech trees. The sunlight was breaking through the fading mist, backlighting the amber and gold leaves. It was challenging to shoot. I wanted to minimise the contrast by finding a viewpoint that put the relative position of the sun behind distant trees,

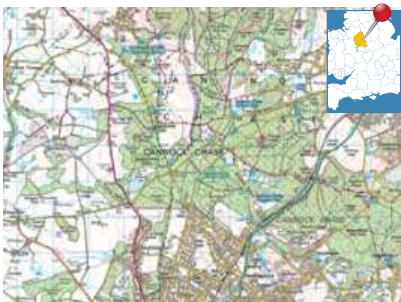
yet still retained the backlit beech leaves.

I have made it a large part of my photography life to express my feelings of the spirit of the Chase, as it is known locally. It is a place close to my home and my heart. I have spent countless days walking here and made many images. On this particular day I was as pleased with the resulting photograph as I was with being out simply enjoying my favourite location.

Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.
Canon EOS 5D MkII
with 24-105mm
lens at 73mm,
ISO 400, 1/80sec
at f/13, handheld

5 miles from Stafford | 25 miles from Birmingham | **ACCESS RATING**    

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there From Stafford, take the A34 south past the Brocton Crossroads. Just before Brocton Gate Farm, turn left on to Camp Road, then turn left again on to Chase Road, leading to Cannock Chase. There is plenty of free parking available.

What to shoot Ancient oak woodland, landscapes, pine forests, Sherbrook Valley, herds of wild fallow deer.

Best time of day Early morning and late evening; and the forest works well on overcast days.

Nearest food/drink Springslade Lodge – Cannock Chase Tea Rooms, Camp Road,

Broadhurst Green, WS12 4PT, 01785 715091, springsladelodge.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Moat House, Lower Penkridge Road, Acton Trussell, ST17 0RJ, 01785 712217, moathouse.co.uk.

Other times of year Late August for stunning heather in bloom. Any time for ancient oak woodland – though it's maybe at its best in winter light.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 244

Nearby locations White Peak District (30 miles); North Staffordshire moorlands (35 miles).

Bench Tor, Devon

Bench Tor is in the south-east area of Dartmoor National Park. Being a little hidden from the road, it is easy to miss, but it is quite easy to access and offers rewards for a little exploration. It sits to the south of the steep-sided Dart valley, and the views here are stunning, particularly in autumn when the leaves are turning. Looking across the valley the views are just as good, with Sharp Tor and Mel Tor both visible.

How to get there Leave the A38 at Ashburton and take the Princetown road out of town. Shortly after the 90-degree bends at Holne Bridge, look for a left turn, signposted Holne. Follow this road for about two miles and enter the car park just before Venford reservoir. Follow the broad ridge north for about half a mile or so; Bench Tor sits on the edge of the Dart valley.

What to shoot Panoramas of the tor with the distant moor behind; use individual rocks as foreground for the more distant



views. The scenery up and down the valley is equally rewarding, as the river snakes through the woods in a very photogenic manner.

Best time of day Early morning in autumn, as the rising sun brings nice side-lighting.

Nearest food/drink Fox Tor Café, Two Bridges Road, Princetown, PL20 6QS, 01822 890238, foxtorcafe.com.

Nearest accommodation No. 44 B&B, 44 North Street, Ashburton, TQ13 7QD, 01364 653449, ashburtonbandb.co.uk.

Other times of year It's good year-round, but summer sunsets with the sun setting upstream work well.

Ordnance Survey map LR 202

Nearby locations Widecombe-in-the-moor (9 miles); Two Bridges – for Wistman's Wood (7 miles).



14 miles from Newton Abbot | 27 miles from Exeter | **ACCESS RATING**

11 miles from Pitlochry | 37 miles from Perth | **ACCESS RATING**



Falls of Bruar, Perthshire

Set in the heart of highland Perthshire, the Falls of Bruar are at their most spectacular in late autumn. The tints from the mixed canopy of larch, Scots pine and birch form a perfect backdrop as the Bruar Water flows through a steep canyon with numerous deep pools and a natural arch.

How to get there From Pitlochry, follow the A9 north to Bruar and park in the House of Bruar shopping centre car park. At the rear of the main building follow the signs for Falls of Bruar alongside the Bruar Water until the first bridge is reached. The walk takes about 15 minutes.

What to shoot Waterfalls, autumnal foliage, the smooth sculpted sides of the canyon and detail shots of rocks in the water.

Best time of day Any time is fine, but



it is preferable to shoot under soft, diffused daylight, which allows detail to be retained in the lower reaches of the gorge and avoids contrast issues.

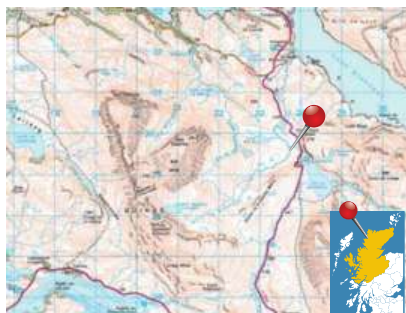
Nearest food/drink The House of Bruar, off the A9 (10 miles north of Pitlochry), PH18 5TW, 01796 483236, houseofbruar.com.

Nearest accommodation Ptarmigan House, Blair Atholl, PH18 5SZ, 01796 481269, ptarmiganhouse.co.uk.

Other times of year Winter is good when trees are covered with snow. Visit in spring for vibrant green foliage.

Ordnance Survey map LR 43

Nearby locations Pass of Killiecrankie (5 miles); Loch Dunmore (9 miles).



© Mark Ferguson

Unapool burn and Quinag, Highland

Assynt in Sutherland is a wilderness landscape of rugged mountains, pristine lochs, and fast-flowing burns. The Quinag mountain range, four miles south of Kylesku, rises dramatically from the surrounding moorland and offers the photographer endless options for stunning mountain shots.

How to get there From Inverness, take the A9 until Tore then follow the A835 to Ledmore junction, via Ullapool. Quinag mountain is about 10 miles north of Ledmore, close to the A894.

What to shoot Moody mountain images with numerous small lochans and burns.

Best time of day Early morning and late evening in summer, but all day in winter when the sun is low.

Nearest food and drink The Kylesku Hotel, Kylesku, IV27 4HW, 01971 502231, kyleskuhotel.co.uk

Nearest accommodation Unapool

House Cottages, Kylesku, IV27 4HW, 01971 502344, unapoolhouse.co.uk

Other times of year Winter snow scenes with frozen lochs and rivers; summer to capture high-viewpoint panoramas of the wild Assynt landscape.

Ordnance Survey map LR 15

Nearby locations Inverpolly (15 miles); Stoer Point lighthouse (15 miles).



39 miles from Lairg | 87 miles from Inverness | ACCESS RATING



© Chris Hoskins

53 miles from Fort William | 143 miles from Glasgow

ACCESS RATING

Kilchoan ferry terminal, Highland

Kilchoan is a small village on the wild and remote peninsula of Ardnamurchan. Ben Hiant, at 528m, is the highest point of the peninsula and dominates the view east from Kilchoan. Lying at the extreme west of the mainland, the light and weather can change incredibly quickly, providing endless opportunities to capture this magnificent landscape in all its glory.

How to get there From Fort William, head south on the A82 for about 30 minutes to the Corran ferry. From Glasgow, head towards Loch Lomond on the M8, then follow the A82 north for two and a half hours to the same ferry. Once you depart the ferry, follow the A861 to Salen, then turn on to the B8007 for around 30 minutes. Once you reach Kilchoan, turn left just after the primary school and there is a car park about a mile down the road, just before the ferry terminal.

What to shoot Views over the bay towards Ben Hiant. Rock pools on the shoreline. Milky Way and star trails – there is very little light pollution. Views south over the Sound of Mull to the Isle of Mull.

Best time of day Sunrise; Ben Hiant, the main focal point, lies to the east. Rock pools and long exposure images are good at any time of day.

Nearest food/drink Kilchoan House Hotel, Kilchoan, PH36 4LH, 01972 510200, kilchoanhousehotel.co.uk

Nearest accommodation Kilchoan House Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Between October to March for sunrises and sunsets. The position of the sun means that it rises and sets over the Sound of Mull.

Ordnance Survey map LR 47

Nearby locations Sanna Bay (5 miles); Ardnamurchan Point (6 miles).



Loch Torren, Argyll

This is a hidden gem around the Glencoe region and can be easily overlooked. Autumn visits provide the best opportunities to shoot the golden trees – on a still day you can capture the trees reflected perfectly in the loch. You may even get some snow on the mountains in the backdrop. On the drive down the road to the loch, some of the hills to the left may look familiar to Harry Potter fans, as scenes featuring Hagrid's Hut were filmed here.

How to get there From Ballachulish, take the A82 toward Glencoe. Take a left turn on to the B863 and then a quick right turn on to Lorn Drive. Follow the road for about two miles until you see a sign on the right for Glencoe cottages. Park on the main road and walk to it from there.



© Chris Davis

What to shoot Trees and mountains reflected in Loch Torren.

Best time of day The sun will be in the best position around midday for nice lighting and shading on the trees and background mountains.

Nearest food/drink Clachaig Inn, Glencoe, PH49 4HX, 01855 811252, clachaig.com.

Nearest accommodation Loch Leven

Hotel, Old Ferry Road, North Ballachulish, Onich, PH33 6SA, 01855 821236, lochlevenhotel.co.uk.

Other times of year Late autumn is the only time when the sun is in the right position and the trees still have some colour.

Ordnance Survey map LR 41

Nearby locations Glen Etive (6 miles), Rannoch Moor (13 miles).

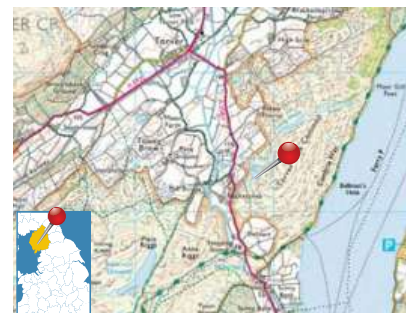
5 miles from Ballachulish | 89 miles from Glasgow | ACCESS RATING

8 miles from Broughton-in-Furness | 43 miles from Lancaster | ACCESS RATING

Kelly Hall Tarn, Cumbria

Kelly Hall Tarn is a small and picturesque tarn on Torver Back Common in the Lake District. There are superb views of the Coniston fells from here. It is a lovely early morning photographic location, especially during the autumn months, when the first sunlight of the day illuminates the bracken-covered slopes of the Old Man of Coniston.

How to get there From junction 36 on the M6, take the A591 north for four miles. Exit on to the A590, and follow this for 16 miles. Take the second exit at the Greenodd roundabout, on to the A5092, and follow this for three miles, before branching right on to the A5084. After five miles, park opposite Lakeland garage. Take the rough track from the



top left-hand corner of the parking area. Shortly after crossing a stream, walk up the slope on the left to reach the tarn.

What to shoot The tarn and the views of the Coniston fells.

Best time of day Early morning, when the rising sun lights the Coniston fells. There is also a chance of mist hanging over the tarn.

Nearest food/drink The Wilson Arms, Torver, Coniston, LA21 8BB, 01539 441237, thewilsonsarms.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Wilson Arms – as above.

Other times of year Winter for the chance of frost, snow and ice on the tarn and Coniston fells.

Ordnance Survey map LR 96 and LR 97

Nearby locations Coniston Water (3 miles); Tarn Hows (6 miles).

© Andrew Ray



7 miles from Braemar | 45 miles from Pitlochry | ACCESS RATING 

Linn O'Dee, Aberdeenshire

Linn O'Dee was a much-favoured beauty spot of Queen Victoria. The Dee River falls violently through a narrow gorge into rocky pools. Beautiful stands of larch and pine adorn the banks.

How to get there From Braemar on the A93, take the Mar Road west. Turn on to the Linn O'Dee road (signposted). Continue along the road, following the river, for seven miles to the bridge. Turn right over the bridge to the National Trust car park on the Mar Lodge Estate.

What to shoot Turbulent waters, the gothic bridge and the surrounding forest.



Best time of day Mid-morning and mid to late afternoon would be best.

Nearest food/drink The Bothy, Invercauld Road, Braemar, AB35 5YP, 01339 741242.

Nearest accommodation Invercauld

Arms Hotel, Main Street, Braemar, AB35 5YR, 01339 741605.

Other times of year Any time of year.

Ordnance Survey map OL 52

Nearby locations Linn O'Quoich (3 miles); Braemar Castle (7 miles).



© Gerry Gavigan

3 miles from Ambleside | 18 miles from Kendal | ACCESS RATING 

Grasmere, Cumbria

Grasmere is one of the smaller lakes in the Lake District, and surely one of the prettiest. It's easy to see why Wordsworth loved this area so much. Being so accessible, it is perhaps more 'manicured' than some, but it is a lake to be enjoyed from many angles, surrounded by stunning and varied woodland. Should you fancy more of a walk, the nearby fells also offer wonderful views.

How to get there Take the A591 from Ambleside towards Grasmere village and, after less than two miles, you'll see the White Moss car park on your left. This is the most convenient option but it's very expensive. From here, follow the footpath (either side of the river will get you there) towards Grasmere and make your way to the south side of the lake, on the edge of Redbank Wood. From here

it's a short stroll along the water's edge.

What to shoot Views across the lake and from the surrounding fells. Woodland scenes, fungi, moss and a variety of trees.

Best time of day Any time of day, but dawn and dusk are best.

Nearest food/drink Greens Café and Bistro, College Street, Grasmere, LA22 9SZ, 01539 435790, greensgrasmere.com.

Nearest accommodation The Grasmere Hotel, Broadgate, Grasmere, LA22 9TA, 01539 435277, grasmerehotel.co.uk.

Other times of year Late spring and early autumn for best foliage colour; winter for more peace and quiet!

Ordnance Survey map LR 90

Nearby locations Rydal Water (1 mile); Loughrigg tarn and fell (3 miles).



© Lizzie Shepherd



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Travels in the world of photography

There comes a time in a writer's life, says Nick Smith, when you just have to admit that sometimes a picture can paint a thousand words, and get out on the road to let your camera do the talking for you

It was of course Mark Twain who said that you should never use a five-dollar word when a fifty-cent word will do. Anyone who's ever felt ground down by writers using highfalutin vocabulary will immediately feel sympathy for the American journalist who, seemingly unlike any other, knew how to say things simply, accurately and memorably. But for those of us who find it difficult to stick to Twain's instruction – and I cheerfully admit that I am one of them – there is a certain amount of comfort to be had from the idea that despite what most people think, there's a heck of a lot more to writing than simply converting coffee into words.

As a travel writer, I've spent the past quarter of a century busily describing the four corners of the globe in prose: a job not made any easier by the fact that most commissioning editors seem to think most readers expect articles and books that closely follow the ones they are already familiar with. Because most writing is done on a keyboard, at a desk, in solitude and silence, writers tend to gain a reputation for being out of touch with the real world. Which is unfair. If we appear lofty and detached, it's probably more to do with the fact that as a group we are expected to turn out the same stuff, again and again. Try anything creatively different and you'll soon find yourself looking around for work.

About 10 years ago I decided the world of photography might be less cynical and embittered. And so it followed that 'getting in touch with the real world' simply involved seeing more of it, and so I set out to see as much of it as I could. I reasoned that while writers can pretty much create entire universes while travelling no further than the Dog & Duck, the photographer was bound by the nature of reality to physically spend more time on the road less travelled, looking at things, even if this was at the expense of thinking about them. Suddenly, I knew what I was going to do next. Photography it appeared to me at the time was the antidote to sitting at a typewriter, envious of the travelling photojournalist.

How does a writer suddenly become a photographer? I suppose I had one major advantage in that the rather old-fashioned world of print journalism I inhabited was often seen as a halfway house to while away a few years before editing magazines and newspapers. A series of chance events led me to take up the big chair on a number of newsstand magazines.

To attain these lofty positions there are several hoops you must jump through, by far the most important of which is to convince the publisher that you can put together a cover of such visual stimulation that you can double the circulation of the magazine overnight. In order to do this, you need to have more than a passing understanding of what makes both an optimist and a good photograph.

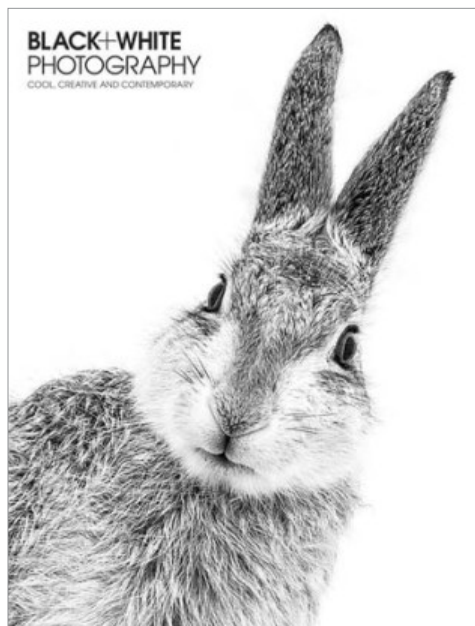
The first thing you expect to confront when you walk into your new office is a team of disaffected journalists who dislike you on principle, because they applied for and failed to get the job you are now starting. But in fact your biggest and most pressing problem is the mountain of photography awaiting your immediate attention. Most of it will be junk and you'll have to throw it away. At this point, realising there is no money in the pot and no decent imagery on stock, you start to wonder if you might have been better off shooting it all yourself.

This realisation coincided with one of the most significant revolutions in photography since the arrival of 35mm film. Digital. Almost overnight, as digital single lens reflex cameras came within the financial reach of the man on the Clapham omnibus, everyone – and I mean, everyone – became a photographer. And I was of their number. Old-school purists will complain that many of this emerging generation of photographers have never had so much as one moment's formal tuition in photography and are nowhere near as good as the handful of big names that seemed to once dominate the pages of the colour supplements. They have a point. But it is only a small one, because cameras don't take photos, people do.

Having decided that I was now going to be simultaneously a travel photographer and writer, I set off – I think my first big gig was shooting elephants in Tanzania – only to find that photography is far harder than it looks. I don't know whether this is because great photographers make it look easy, or whether it is because there's some unwritten universal law that says there's no substitute for experience. Whatever it is, my first attempts to impress picture editors were feeble and clichéd. I took offence at my own naivety and decided that, whatever it took, I was going to get better. Like a street-fighting kid who sees boxing as the only way out of the gutter, I saw travel photography as my passport out of the office. I'd like to say that I've never looked back, but I did, once. And that was to wave goodbye.

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READER GALLERY

Each month we publish the very best images from all those submitted for our Reader Gallery. Turn to page 84 to find out how to enter your images. Here's this month's winner and, on page 60, our runner-up...



Anna Stevenson

I can't really remember a time when I didn't want to take photographs, even if they were just snaps with an Instamatic. I initially used black & white film but this proved to be too expensive, especially with no darkroom of my own. So it wasn't until digital came along that my photography really took off.

More recently, in 2011, I moved from the West Midlands to Devon, which has allowed me to further develop my passion for outdoor photography – both landscapes and wildlife. I obtained my Associate of the Royal Photographic Society award last year with some fantastic support from fellow female landscape photographers, and am now formulating plans for a fellowship panel of work.

I've now switched from my Sony A850 camera to a Canon EOS 5D MkIII, but I do miss my Zeiss lens; nothing compares with it. I'm not one for the latest gadgets or gear, but I have found that as you develop you can outgrow some bits of kit and need to upgrade.

I like taking images with subtle drama and strong lines in them. I often take very busy photos but am trying to simplify my compositions more at the moment.

My ambition, apart from gaining my RPS fellowship, is to exhibit my work. I have learnt a lot about printing my own images, which I think is an important part of the artistic process. I'd hate for my pictures to just sit on my computer. I have had some minor successes in international photographic salons, and two prints in the RPS Visual Art Exhibition last year, but want to do more.

Hometown Plymouth
Occupation Office worker
Photography experience

About 10 years

annastevensonphotography.com

above 'The tree', taken on Dartmoor. I added a couple of natural texture layers to the photograph to supplement those in the scene. I use textures from photographs I have taken; here it is one of the sea and one of a rusty piece of metal. Sony A850 with Zeiss 24-70mm lens, ISO 1000, 1/60sec at f/11





WHY WE LOVE THEM...

Here at the *OP* office, we love to see people experimenting with their photography to see where it will take them. Quite often those journeys down lesser-known paths lead to a dead end, but occasionally head to a refreshing way of seeing the landscape through a camera. Anna's painterly landscapes, created by adding texture layers based on other photographs she has taken, are full of emotional impact. They take what could be deemed quite ordinary scenes and lift them into images that seep into the subconscious thanks to their lack of strict representation. Anything that helps the mind engage with an image is a good thing, especially when it is done with the thought, care and skill that Anna has applied to these wonderful photographs.

*left 'Dartmoor evening'.
Sony A850 with Zeiss 24-70mm lens at
24mm, ISO 100, 1/6sec at f/10; the texture
layer added to this image is barnacles on
a rock.*

>



Deborah Jordan

I have a deep-seated love for nature, and growing up in Africa and experiencing the bush entices you to look at wildlife in its own environment and to ask questions about how the natural world works. I've had an interest in photography since childhood, starting with a Kodak Pocket Instamatic using 110 film, before growing into my first SLR camera, and through to the exciting digital era. During a level one Field Guides Association course in South Africa a few years back, I was drawn to the insect and macro environment, and to opportunities to study the smaller wonders in nature with my camera.

I strive to bring my own perspective to my images through trying to understand the subject, studying

details of its behaviour and by attempting to capture an animal's special characteristics. I also love to get out into the African bush to capture images of the bigger animals from a unique perspective.

My desire to be in the natural world drives me to spend as much free time there as possible and to challenge myself to shoot images that at least attempt to tell a story. My main focus is South Africa, but I've been privileged to visit some amazing places in recent years, including Costa Rica, Madagascar and Rwanda.

I hope to one day hold my own exhibition. I made a conscious effort to start sharing my images a few years back, and last year I was delighted to have some success and positive feedback, including having some images published in UK photographic magazines.

Hometown

Johannesburg,
South Africa

Occupation

IT consultant

Photography

experience 20 years

concepts-in-nature.com

This image was captured in Mbombela, Mpumalanga, South Africa, which has a sub-tropical climate and provides great opportunities for macro photography. I discovered this interesting-looking nymph bug while I was trying to find some shade under an acacia tree on a very hot day. The bug is under 5mm in length and very active. I managed to shoot it against the natural background when it paused to check out the next route to take. Canon EOS 6D with Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 L macro lens, ISO 1000, 1/125sec at f/7.1, handheld

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This month Chris Weston explores how releasing yourself from pre-determined goals and plans could be the essential key to setting free your creative self

PART 9 The better angels in our head

'When I let go of what I am then I become what I might be.' Lao Tzu



© U.S. Federal Government

Bill Russell is widely considered one of the greatest basketball players of all time. A defensive-centre for the all-conquering Boston Celtics of the 1950s and 60s, Russell was five-time Most Valuable Player, twelve-time All-Star and an Olympic gold medalist. In a career spanning 13 years, he amassed 11 NBA Championship medals.

Commentators – and at least one teammate – described Russell as having 'a neurotic need to win'. But in his autobiography Russell says that sometimes, when he stepped on to the court, he knew it was going to be a special game because all of a sudden, winning and losing didn't matter. He was no longer attached to the outcome. In those games, he says, he instinctively knew where the ball was going to be passed; he saw in his mind how he was going to block a shot before the opponent even knew they were going to shoot the ball. He went on to describe how, when stepping off the court, he had this sensation that he had participated in something that went beyond a result, as if he was participating in a flow of energy that enabled his very best to come out.

left Sports champion Bill Russell – seen here with President Obama next to his newly unveiled statue – often felt that he was participating in a flow of energy that transcended winning or losing the game.

I have had similar moments throughout my life. In 2011, for charity, I rode the entire 2,200-mile route of the Tour de France, following precisely the itinerary of the professionals. For most of the 19 days, each day cycling a hundred miles and more past vineyards, along rugged coastal roads or up and over the Pyrenees and Alps, my main thought was simply to reach the finish line – to put the miles behind me, get through the day and achieve my objective. But on a couple of days, those contemplations never entered my head. Finishing or not finishing no longer mattered. I had no attachment to the outcome of the day. Instead, I was completely absorbed in the moment. There were no burning lungs or screaming muscles. There was no distinction between man and machine. There was just this unyielding energy through which my very best emerged. It felt as if I was activating a potential far greater than my individual self. This, I believe, is where great art, great writing, great photography come from. When you're fully immersed in the present moment without the burden of having to achieve a specific aim.

The penultimate day of the tour ended at the top of Alpe d'Huez, a notoriously gruelling climb. But I was in the zone that day and when I got to the top, I didn't want to stop.





above By immersing myself in and connecting with Yellowstone's wintry wilderness, I subconsciously let go of any attachment I had to an outcome.



Participating in the flow of energy

It occurred to me that this is what happened to me in Yellowstone in January last year (OP190). Having set aside my methodical approach to wildlife photography and stopped chasing the light, immersing myself instead in Yellowstone's wintry wilderness and connecting with the energy of the life around me, I had subconsciously let go of any attachment to an outcome. In that none-attachment, I opened a channel that enabled potential to flow. In that sense, I was no longer the creator but the receiver of images.

There are notable examples of the power of letting go throughout art. In his youth, the sculptor Richard Serra wanted to be a painter. He lived in Florence, Italy, and one day travelled to Spain where he visited the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid and saw the painting *Las Meninas* by the 17th-century artist Diego Velázquez. It changed his life. Realising he was never going to make it as a great painter, Serra returned to his studio in Florence and dumped all his paintings in the river Arno – literally. He let go of painting in that moment but he didn't let go of art. He moved to New York City and embarked upon a playful exploration of verbs to inspire his work. This ultimately led to him becoming one of the world's great contemporary sculptors.

Despite the many examples, like any scientist or, in my case, non-scientist with a systematic mind, I wanted to test and challenge this theory, and an opportunity came on a recent trip to Katmai National Park, Alaska.



Richard Serra let go of his goal to be a painter and instead embarked upon a playful, creative journey that led him to contemporary sculpture.



Las Meninas, the painting that changed the course of Richard Serra's artistic endeavour.

1/1500sec and be there – and beyond

Katmai is my favourite photographic location. It's the place I've been to the most and the place I most look forward to going back to. I lead an annual tour there and this year's group was formed mainly of experienced photographers, some of whom were on their second visit to the park. However, two of the group were relative novices – Julia and Laura, a mother and her daughter from Colombia, who had joined at the behest of a long-standing client.

On the first day, we chatted about what they wanted to achieve photographically and I helped them set their cameras to the appropriate settings for the shots they wanted. Unsurprisingly, they were fixed on the classic action shots of bears fishing, interacting and generally *puk-ukking* around (*puk-uk* is an Inupiat word meaning to poke around and get up to mischief). I advised them to aim for a minimum shutter speed of 1/1500sec and to adjust aperture and/or ISO accordingly.

Using this technique, the first couple of days in the park proved successful and, aided by clear skies and bright sunshine, they produced some technically good images – perfectly focused and



faithfully exposed records of bear behaviour.

Julia, however, is an artist and Laura has a vivid imagination. I could see that neither was entirely happy with the aesthetics of their efforts so far.

above Technically perfect images, while often revealing, sometimes lack that special something that elicits an emotional response from the audience.

Choices

By day three, the weather had turned. The sky was covered in dense clouds, which the sun, high above, found difficult to penetrate. With ISOs bordering the unacceptably high and apertures as wide open as they could be, the 1/1500sec target shutter speed was way off. A quick and early review of their photographs on the viewing screens told them what I already knew – the drop in shutter speed was causing soft images. Whatever technique they put to use to achieve their goal, nothing worked.

‘When there’s not enough light, there are just three things you can do,’ I hinted. Sitting with them, I explained. ‘You can add light by using flash but when the bears are at a distance the

flash will be largely ineffective and when they’re close by... well, let’s just say that flash isn’t a wise option. You can go home and wait for a better day...’ They didn’t seem too keen on that idea, so I continued, ‘Or you can let go of your pre-determined ideas and be creative.’ I could see they were intrigued.

Telling them to switch to a slow shutter speed of 1/30sec and giving a brief but detailed primer on panning techniques, I let them loose. Freed of the constraints their original goals had placed on them, two incredible photographic artists emerged, like butterflies from their cocoons, using light and form to create some of the most absorbing images of all the photographers there.

By letting go of stereotypes, creative energy has a chance to flow, often with surprising results.



Redirecting your focus

A goal defines an outcome and dictates actions, closing off the imagination to possibility and potential. Creative minds explore in an open and experimental way, starting out without a fixed destination in mind because such a target traps them on a predetermined path. Aiming for a specific outcome becomes a barrier to creativity – if you set out looking for one thing only, it's likely that's all you'll find.

Letting go of a thought, an idea or a desired outcome isn't easy. We grow up, are taught and work in environments where targets are drilled into us. At school we are given prescribed tasks, tests and examinations, set out in a nationwide curriculum, in order to attain a good job that will help us to acquire all the things we're told success is measured by. At work, we have routines and targets, league tables and timetables, to achieve and measure ourselves by. Even when something potentially more exciting emerges, goals restrict how we respond.

Strip your day of targets and remove attachments to outcomes, however, and the journey becomes exciting, work more enriching. Of course, the drive towards achievement is important but instead of identifying goals it is better to identify areas of focus. A goal defines an outcome but an area of focus establishes what to spend time on. A goal is a result – an end; an area of focus is a gateway to potential new beginnings. This is the change Richard Serra made when he let go of his ambition to be a painter and indulged in a focus area.



above Goals, in any area of life, define outcomes and dictate actions, closing off the imagination to possibility and potential.



Shadows and light

I was lying in bed, neither awake nor asleep, when I felt a presence in the room. It had a human form but was featureless. It was ominous, threatening, pervasive. I tried to move but found I was paralysed. The presence loomed, hostile and menacing, but while my mind was fully conscious to the danger, my body was immobile, as if weighed down by a force many times greater than gravity. In that moment, I felt terror. By some means, I lashed out with an arm, catching my girlfriend hard on the back. And in that moment of grounding, the presence evaporated. After a while I thought little of it – just a nightmare. Except it happened again, another time, another place. The third time it happened, I'd fallen asleep on the sofa. The same portentous, intimidating presence lurked by the doorway – a shadow hiding in the shadows. Initially, I felt the same panic but this time my reaction surprised me. I didn't fight it, instead I let it come. It wasn't resignation or detachment. It was a sense of letting go – what will be will be. The shadow grew, intense in its dark menace, until all I could see was black. Then it passed straight through me. Still awake, instantly I was flying, above a meadow, the warmth of the sun on my skin. I could feel the rush of air on my arms, lifting me. I angled my right hand and I banked left. Straightening, I tilted both hands downward and dived towards the earth. I was in complete control, utterly free. I was soaring.

It is only now, many years down the road, that the true meaning of this event is apparent to me. In our modern world of attachments, we are often at war with ourselves, struggling against our own nature to meet the expectations of other people and society. The presence in the room on those three dark nights was, I believe, the voices of my demons shouting down the better angels in my head.

The American psychologist Erich Fromm said, 'Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainty'. A little while after the third dream, for once I let the trumpets of my better angels be heard: I quit the job I loathed, letting go of the certainties it provided, to follow a road marked by potential to reach a destination I didn't know.

Next month: Chris Weston reveals why doing your best isn't good enough.



Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015

This world-renowned competition has once again surfaced a remarkable collection of wildlife images that really stand out from the crowd. This is our selection of favourites from the winners and finalists, which can all be seen in the exhibition at London's Natural History Museum



left WINNER: AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Edwin Giesbers

The Netherlands

Still life

A great crested newt hangs motionless near the surface of the stream. Also motionless in the water, in Gelderland in the Netherlands, was Edwin in a wetsuit. He had very slowly moved his compact camera right under the newt, and though he knew the shot he wanted, he had to guess at the framing and literally point and shoot. The male had just taken a breath and was possibly warming up at the surface. It was a cold April morning, and the trees were not yet in leaf, but it was mating time for these large newts, and the males were already on the lookout for females. Edwin took this shot as part of a major story on the threat facing amphibians throughout the Netherlands and Belgium: an Asian skin fungus similar to the one that has annihilated frogs and toads worldwide and has all but wiped out fire salamanders in the Netherlands. Scientists are bracing themselves for a collapse of European amphibian populations, unless some way is found to stop the fungus from spreading.

Canon G15 with 28-140mm f/1.8-2.8 lens at 28mm, ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/6.3, Canon housing

FINALIST: MAMMALS

Wim van den Heever

South Africa

The final leap

Wim knew that if he continued to follow this leopard for another few days, he might witness something special. She was hunting out on the plains of Namibia's Etosha National Park, where the lack of vegetation meant that a normal leopard-style ambush wasn't possible. 'I was amazed to see her trying to stalk in such short grass,' says Wim. The first hunt he witnessed failed when the wind changed direction and her scent gave her away. But shortly after, a large male springbok started moving in her direction. As he approached, 'she just disappeared into the short grass,' says Wim. 'Then to my amazement, she launched herself at the ram with incredible agility and strength.' Wim reacted instantly, and captured the action through the window of his vehicle as the leopard gripped the springbok with her powerful shoulders and pulled him down.

Nikon D4 with 600mm f/4 lens, ISO 1000, 1/3200sec at f/8, Badger Door Bracket and Wimberley Gimbal head





left FINALIST: UNDER WATER

Jordi Chias Pujol

Spain

It came from the gloom

Jordi had just five minutes at a depth of 40m to look for subjects to photograph. The water in the deep, glacier-fed Lemaire Channel, cutting between the Antarctic Peninsula and Booth Island, was too cold to stay in longer, and the risks from decompression after a long dive were especially unwanted this far from medical help. It was his second dive beside a vertical wall of rock, where he had seen many fascinating creatures. This time he was rewarded with a beautiful Atolla jellyfish – a deep-sea species of crown jelly, with a grooved bell not more than 15cm across. Its ability to produce bioluminescent flashes when under attack (thought to lure other predators to see off its attacker) gives it the nickname of ‘alarm jellyfish’, and in the dark depths, its red colour renders it invisible. Jordi pointed his camera up towards the surface, using strobes to illuminate the jellyfish in the gloom and also gently lighting the ‘fingers’ of Antarctic octocorals on the wall. When a group of penguins zoomed across the frame, ‘I shot instinctively,’ says Jordi, ‘just managing to catch the last one.’ The outline of the gentoo penguin, identifiable by its characteristically prominent tail, added perspective to this otherworldly glimpse of polar sea life.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 8-15mm f/4 lens at 15mm, ISO 320, 1/100sec at f/10, Seacam housing, x2 Seaflash 150D strobes

WINNER: MAMMALS

Don Gutoski

Canada

A tale of two foxes

From a distance, Don could see that the fox was chasing something across the snow. As he got closer, he realised it was an Arctic fox, and by the time he was close enough to take photographs, the smaller fox was dead. Don watched for three hours from the tundra buggy as the red fox fed on the carcass. The light was very low, and it was -30°C, which meant Don needed to keep both the camera and his fingers from freezing. Finally, having eaten its fill, there was a moment when the fox paused to re-grip the skin before starting to drag away the remains to cache for later. It was then that Don took his winning shot. The drama was enacted in Wapusk National Park, near Cape Churchill in Canada. Increasing temperatures in the Arctic have allowed the range of the red fox to extend northward. Both species of fox hunt small rodents, in particular lemmings, but where the ranges overlap, the red fox has been recorded as a predator of Arctic foxes as well as a competitor for food. But few actual kills by red foxes have been witnessed, probably because the two species normally avoid each other. As climate change causes the tundra to warm and allows the red fox to move further north, it’s likely that conflicts between the two will become more common.

Canon EOS 1D X with 200-400mm f/4 lens and 1.4x extender at 784mm, ISO 640, 1/1000sec at f/8



FINALIST: 15-17 YEARS

Marc Albiac

Spain

A genet feat of a leap

In autumn, Marc, together with two friends and his father, set about discovering where genets might be living near his home in the Serra de Collserola, the mountains that rise above Barcelona. Having found droppings, they set up a camera trap in a tree near the spot. It revealed that three different genets (with different spot patterns) were using the area. Over the next months, they regularly put out food at the location so the animals would become used to human scent. By March, this energetic genet was at ease with Marc's presence as it hunted for rodents. Working out where it was likely to go, he put a little food on a pile of logs and set up his tripod. Using a double exposure (with a flash to freeze the genet as it jumped from a rock to the logs and a long exposure for the stars), he took the genet's portrait placed against a backdrop of the starry sky.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm f/4 lens, ISO 1600, 15sec at f/4, x4 flashes, tripod



FINALIST: UNDER WATER

Thomas P Peschak

Germany/South Africa

Just jellyfish

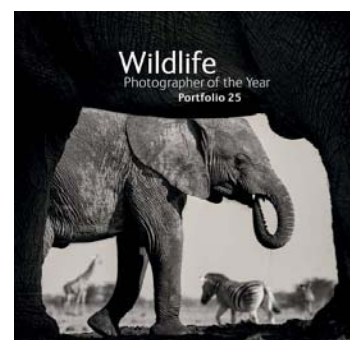
'For years, I have been trying to make a photograph that foreshadows a world without fish,' says Tom, 'and this one evening, all the elements aligned.' He had been photographing Cape fur seals around Duiker Island off South Africa's western coast when the current propelled a large number of Cape box jellyfish into a sheltered bay, and he quickly refocused his attention. Jellyfish populations have increased substantially in many parts of the world, with overfishing and climate change thought to be the main causes. (In 2005, a nuclear reactor north of Cape Town lost power when an unusually high number of jellyfish were sucked up with the seawater needed to cool the power station.) Warmer waters stimulate growth and reproductive potential, while overfishing reduces the abundance of fish, notably sardines and anchovies, that prey on plankton, including juvenile jellyfish. In turn, jellyfish eat the eggs and larvae of these fish, reducing their populations even further. The consequences ripple through the food web, with predators such as Cape fur seals most affected. Their diet includes a lot of plankton-eating fish but not jellyfish. The sun was low on the horizon as the playful sealions darted through the tangled maze of tentacles, allowing Tom to capture this vision of a future ocean dominated by jellyfish.

Nikon D3S with 16mm lens, ISO 320, 1/250sec at f/18, Subal housing, x2 Inon strobes

GET THE BOOK AND SEE THE EXHIBITION

The *Wildlife Photographer of the Year – Portfolio 25* book is now available. Featuring all the winning images and selected other entries, it costs £20 (Natural History Museum, ISBN 978-0565093778).

For details about the must-see exhibition of all the winning photographs at the Natural History Museum in London, see the Big View on page 14.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Christopher Roche

Christopher Roche is an Irish travel photographer specialising in hard-to-reach destinations. By trade he directs TV commercials, which means he's always working with some form of pictorial image. Nick Smith puts him in the spotlight



NICK SMITH Is it fair to describe you as a travel photographer?

CHRISTOPHER ROCHE I honestly don't know. I love to photograph people, but I started off photographing black & white landscapes in the west of Ireland. It's hard to categorise my photography as travel. After all, that could equally mean anywhere in England. A lot of my work tends to feature people in landscapes, which is probably why it ends up being called travel photography.

NS The places you photograph aren't exactly holiday destinations...

CR That's right. A lot of my work is in places such as Ethiopia, Tibet and India. One of the reasons for this is that I am always looking for something original. Today you can find images of anywhere just by Googling it. So I am trying to add something by showing things that perhaps haven't been seen before.

NS Would you say that including people is the key to your work?

CR I am interested in the human spirit, particularly in my Ethiopia project. People that live in the remoter, harsh environments tend to have a depth and simplicity to their lives. Part of capturing something different is to try to find people who are in some way different. But I also love the sense of adventure, going up to altitude and escaping the city... going somewhere that's a challenge.

NS Is this an antidote to your real life?

CR Professionally, I direct television commercials and corporate videos. This is of course a very different way of working with the visual image. But underneath it all, what these threads have in common, is the idea that I am telling a story, whether it's a film script or a photo-essay. At the end of it all, I'm describing a narrative with a camera.





There are different stories to be told. But I do find that travelling with my camera can be quite meaningful.

NS What are the characteristics of a Chris Roche photo?

CR I am trying to capture the emotion or the character I'm photographing. I try not to simply take pretty pictures. If there is something slightly off-balance, anticipated or awkward, I'm drawn to that. They're all classically composed, I think. But I do try to take photos from other people's viewpoints, so quite a lot end up being taken from behind people's heads. I'm trying to enter their world, their environment. Keep it simple and graphic, but also intimate and epic.

NS Some of the work is quite gritty and real...

CR I do tend to leave in things like

telegraph wires and vans. None of this gets edited out because I like the idea of presenting what you see. But I'm not really going for pure photojournalism either. Maybe something painterly or poetic, too. Also, I don't have the patience to spend ages fiddling around in post-production on the computer. And besides, some of the images that might be perhaps a little out of focus are probably the most interesting.

NS Do you like mainstream travel photography?

CR Well, I'm certainly not interested in creating that sort of perfect photography that you see in travel brochures. I'm far more interested in trying to capture the essence of the world we live in.

NS Is that a good summary of your new book on Ethiopia?

CR I grew up in Africa for a while and so had a sense of this biblical and extraordinary country that was so different from the rest of Africa. It was a several-year project, with a theme of devotion and a book at the end of it. I wanted to show the country as I saw it, and wanted others to see it too.



Christopher Roche's new book, The Priests and Pilgrims of Ethiopia, is out now

CHRISTOPHER'S TOP TIPS

» **One thing I never go on a shoot without is...**

a notebook and pencil. I take a lot of notes as I go along about the people I meet.

» **My one piece of advice would be to...** follow the direction your heart wants you to go in. Passion and enthusiasm are more important than discipline.

» **Something I try to avoid is...** dust. Clean your kit every night. I just don't understand how all that dust gets into the camera. It's soul destroying.

CHRISTOPHER'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

To see more of Christopher's work visit chrisrochephotographer.co.uk

1970s As a seven-year-old seeing Rembrandts in the National Gallery.

1990s Started selling black & white landscape photographs of the west of Ireland.

1997 Inspired by Sabastião Salgado's exhibition, Workers, in Prague.

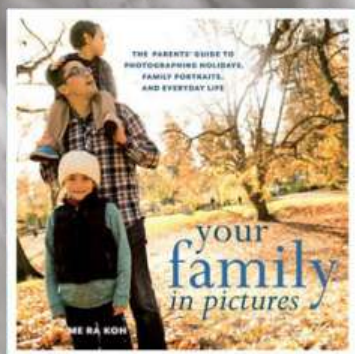
2008 Travelled to Spiti Valley and started shooting in colour.

2009 Held first exhibition in London.

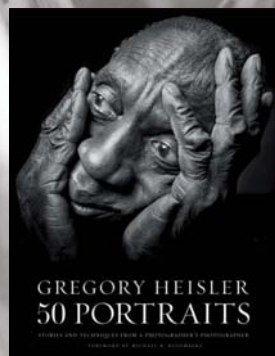
2014 Started photographic project on 'Devotion'. Published first book. Exhibited at RGS.

2015 Travelled to Tibet. Working on photographic book on Varanasi.

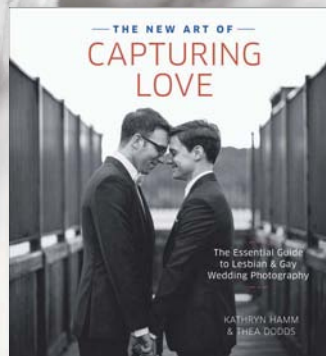
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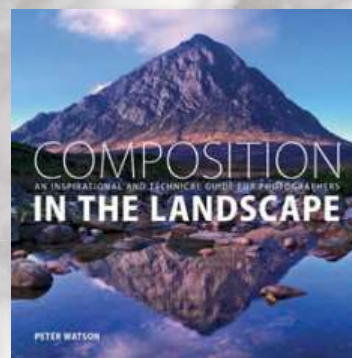
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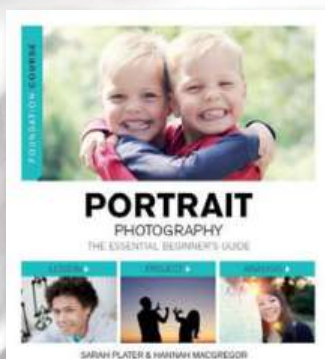
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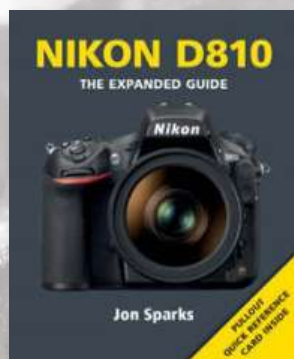
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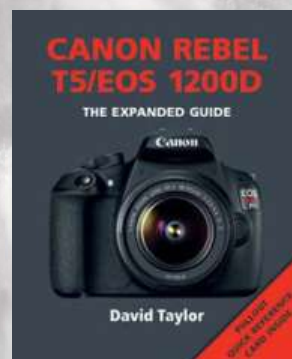
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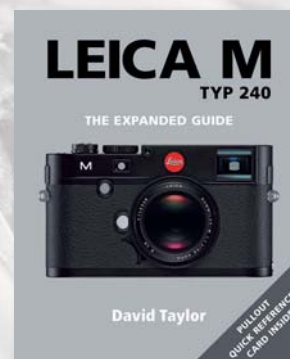
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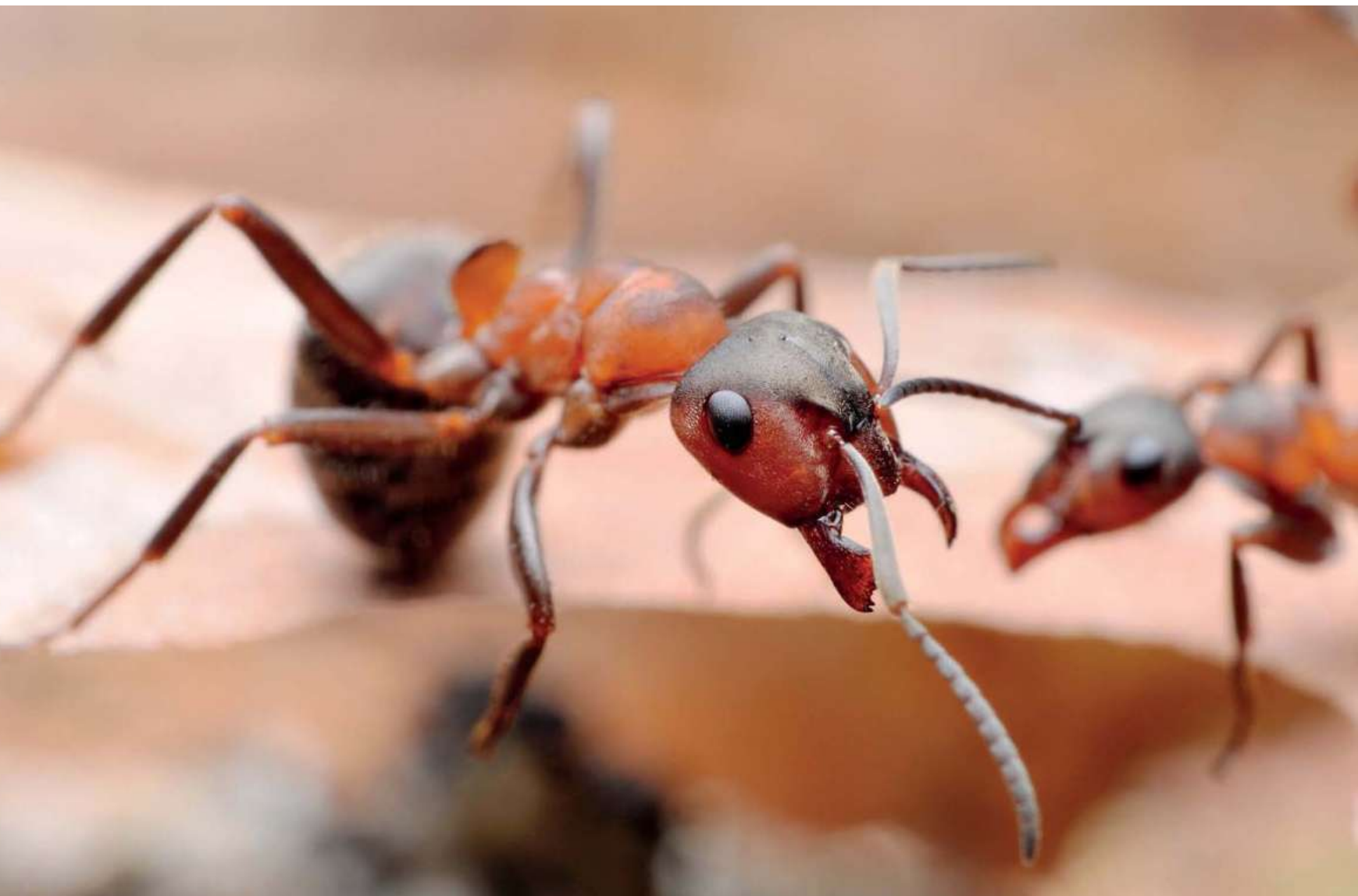


HIDE AND SIKA

Laurie Campbell offers field tips to help you get closer to sika deer

Life in the Wild

Having spent a day photographing ospreys at a purpose-built pond, Laurie Campbell is keen to get back into the field to explore. He tries out an extreme macro technique to capture the miniature world of wood ants



above These wood ants were shot using a homemade flash diffuser made from a margarine carton – it was lined with aluminium foil, covered with kitchen roll, and bound with gaffer tape. Nikon D3X with reversed Nikon 24mm f/2.8 manual focus lens, ISO 160, 1/250sec at f/16, diffused flash, handheld

Regular readers of this column may remember that in the July issue (OP193) I wrote about my experiences photographing crested tits. I hadn't covered the species for decades and needed to obtain better images for a book to accompany a television series about Highland wildlife that is due to be screened early next year.

Of course, crested tits weren't the only species for which I needed to replace desperately dated coverage; my next objective was to capture photographs of ospreys doing what ospreys do best:

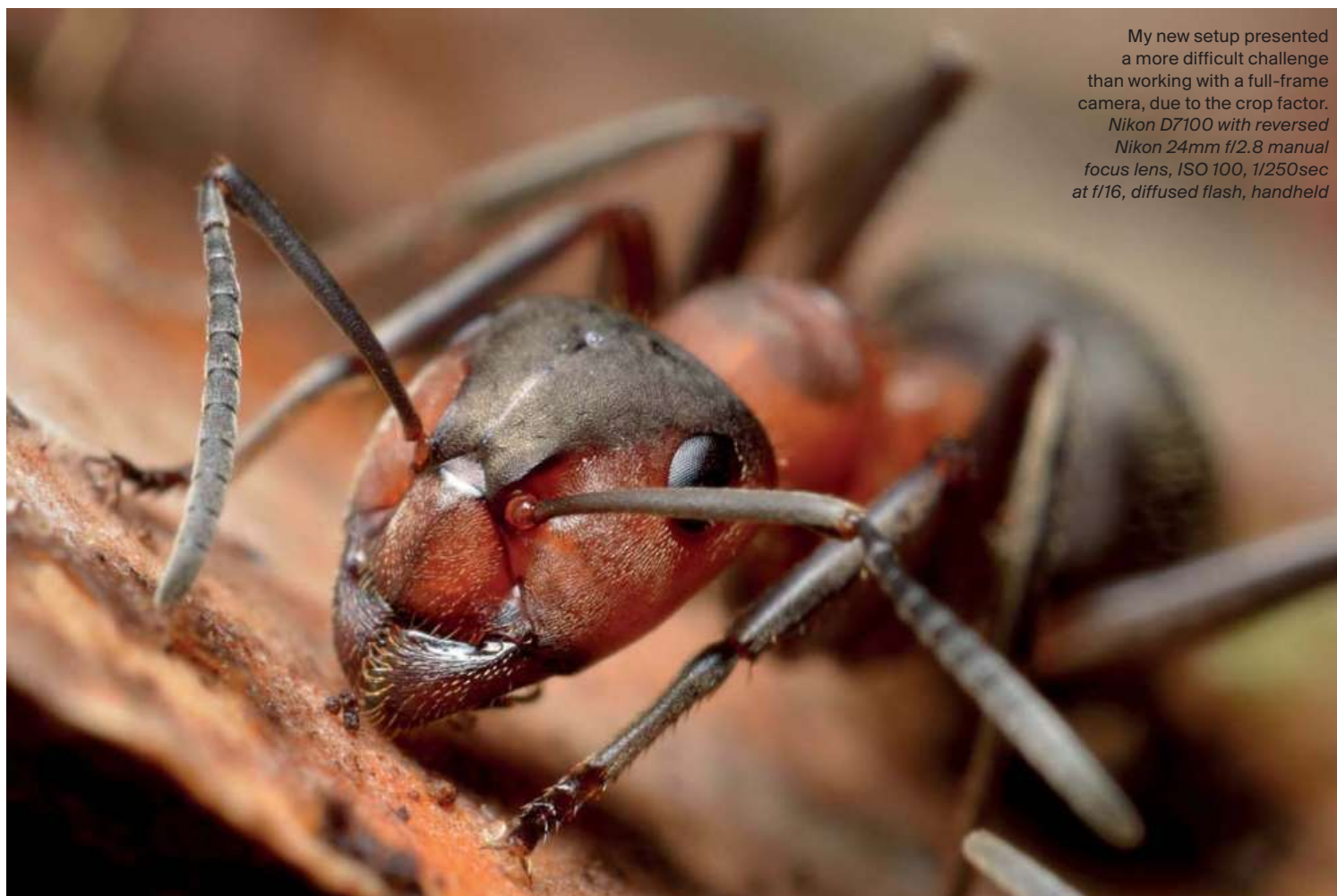
plunging into water and grabbing fish.

I'd long been aware of a facility created at a fishery on Rothiemurchus Estate, in the Spey Valley, for photographing this behaviour, but had never gone to investigate it because it wasn't the sort of opportunity I would normally take advantage of. Besides, judging by the volume of pictures of ospreys fishing that we see these days, there certainly didn't seem much incentive to add any more to the image libraries I deal with. Still, there was a pressing need for images for the book, and during a journey north to the

Aigas Field Centre in July I decided to pop in en route to discover more.

The staff couldn't have been more welcoming, and I was given a tour. The fishery comprised a fairly large raised pool stocked with trout, flanked by a series of low wooden hides set into the embankment. Viewpoint, lighting and background had all been taken into consideration; it was clearly a well thought out facility. I accepted an offer to use it on my return journey south.

Coincidentally, I arrived at Aigas and learned that ospreys had been regularly



My new setup presented a more difficult challenge than working with a full-frame camera, due to the crop factor.
Nikon D7100 with reversed Nikon 24mm f/2.8 manual focus lens, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/16, diffused flash, handheld

seen fishing on the estate loch, so I spent two days in a hide but failed to obtain any decent photographs. It is a beautiful natural setting, but because the birds could drop down anywhere it would have taken more time than I had available to get results, so I returned to Rothiemurchus.

Despite having had an exciting and enjoyable time, and although I obtained some good quality photographs, I felt that this had been a token gesture to fulfil a need, and was left with an urge to photograph something else to restore some sort of balance. I had recently purchased an elderly manual focus 24mm Nikon lens and combined it with a reversing ring to shoot some pretty extreme macro photographs of insects; I was itching to test it on wood ants in the native pine forest beyond the fishery.

With just one day to spare before I needed to return home, I passed up the opportunity of shooting more coverage of ospreys fishing at Rothiemurchus. I drove past the fishery in favour of a satisfying day photographing the wood ants. For me, it came down to following my heart and photographing a subject for which I had slightly more enthusiasm.

LAURIE'S FACTFILE

How to get closer to wildlife

» Much as I think the fishery at Rothiemurchus provides an excellent opportunity to photograph ospreys in action, my main reason for not visiting sooner is that I am a little uncomfortable with the concept of what is becoming known as 'pay and display' photography. I find it slightly alien and am motivated more by the satisfaction I get from simply going out into the field and identifying opportunities for photographing wildlife and working out how best to take advantage of them by myself. Pay and display photography does little to help nature photographers develop field skills for themselves, which at one time were regarded as a prerequisite that every nature photographer should have.

» The temptation to photograph wood ants in preference to ospreys was thanks to a renewed enthusiasm after finding a way of photographing them at greater magnification than ever before. True macro lenses normally offer life size or 1:1 magnification, and the simplest way of really appreciating what this means is to think in terms of the area contained within the aperture of a 35mm slide mount (35mm x 24mm) if it were placed over the subject – assuming that a full-

frame camera were used. To photograph wood ants I needed to get close enough so that an area of only 10-15mm wide filled the frame. One way of achieving extra magnification is to add extension tubes or bellows, but the total amount of extension needed to get a 100mm macro lens to focus down three or four times life-size, for example, makes the whole assembly rather unwieldy. And then there is the matter of the amount of light lost using so much extension.

» Reversing a wideangle lens is just one of a number of ways of getting closer without having the problems associated with using lots of extension. Other options include specialised short-mount lenses and enlarging lenses, such as those used in the days of film when printing negatives or transparencies.

These aren't exactly 'off the shelf' solutions and do require custom-made mounting plates to allow them to be fitted to cameras, hence my 'quick fix' approach of using a reversed wideangle lens. Canon users, of course, have the advantage of using the brilliant 65mm MPE macro lens, which offers 5:1 magnification.

What to shoot this month...

Laurie's November highlights



▲ **Acorn barnacles** (*Semi balanus balanoides*) are perhaps the most common crustaceans found around the shores of the UK. They live in the intertidal zone, where they are exposed twice every 24 hours as the tide recedes. Homing in on dense clusters of these animals with a macro lens can yield some great images, but there are limits as to how much variety can be obtained when photographing them attached to rocks. Try looking for colonies attached to other objects where the surface texture affects the arrangement of the barnacles, such as is the case with barnacles found on eroded timber. *Nikon D3X with Nikon 70-180mm f/4.5-5.6 macro lens at 160mm, ISO 100, 1.3sec at f/32, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod*



▲ With winter now upon us, look for opportunities to photograph flocks of sparrows and finches, which congregate to feed on the seed produced by 'game cover' crops planted on the margins of arable fields by farmers and landowners to encourage pheasants and partridges. These can benefit small bird species too, such as tree sparrows, goldfinches, yellowhammers and chaffinches, which can gather in flocks of hundreds and stay for weeks on end. They can be difficult to photograph. One way of recording them is to wait until groups settle on roadside trees at dawn or dusk. *Nikon D2X with Nikon 500mm f/4 AFS lens, ISO 200, 1/200sec at f/10, cable release, tripod*



◀ The large flocks of waterfowl that band together to take advantage of 'the safety in numbers' strategy in our estuaries and firths have the potential to make for some impressive photographs. They present a large enough target that there is no need to use a hide. Survival often relies upon them taking to the air, which they tend to do after being spooked by a predator such as a peregrine falcon. Given that some of these sites can be quite close to busy areas of maritime traffic or industrial complexes, it makes sense just to accept and include these elements in the background. *Nikon D3X with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 200, 1/640sec at f/5.6, tripod*

▲ Originally introduced to the UK from the Far East, some populations of **sika deer** (*Cervus nippon*) living in the Scottish Highlands spend a great deal of their time living in forestry plantations, where their numbers are difficult to control through stalking. This is essential on some estates because they interbreed with native red deer. One way of photographing them is to wait until they emerge from the forest late in the day to take advantage of better grazing and browsing opportunities. Check wind direction, and be in position in advance, using natural cover and camouflage netting to conceal yourself. *Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 800, 1/50sec at f/4, tripod, hide*



MORE SEASONAL SUBJECTS...

Flora

Oak moss lichen (*Evernia prunastri*) – a frequent, bushy species found growing on tree trunks.

Bramble/blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) – leaves can turn magenta-red.

Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) – the seed heads on the tips of stems look good backlit.

Fauna

Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) – now looking their best with full, thick winter coat and tail.

Rock pipit (*Anthus petrosus*) – the seashore equivalent of the meadow pipit.

Mole (*Talpa europaea*) – fresh molehills stand out more in frosty weather.

WORLD WILDLIFE SPECTACLES

Tigers, India

There are as few as 3,200 tigers left in the world, and more than half of them are found in India.

The Satpura

forests of Madhya Pradesh include several tiger reserves connected by forest corridors, forming the largest block of tiger habitat in India; the area offers perhaps the greatest hope for this iconic species. The best time to look for tigers in India is from mid-October to mid-November and from February to May; Bandhavgarh, Pench and Kanha reserves offer a good chance of a sighting.



© Photoshot/Shutterstock

Barn swallows, South Africa

During September, at the beginning of the southern spring, migratory barn swallows begin to return to South Africa. The largest roosting site is Mount Moreland, in KwaZulu Natal; on November evenings, around half an hour before sunset, up to five million barn swallows gather to roost. Numbers peak again in March, when the birds are preparing for their migration back to Europe.

mountmoreland.com



© Fafal/Shutterstock

WINDOWS ON NATURE

Days may be getting shorter but there's plenty to see and photograph in the natural world at this time of year. Birds are around in huge numbers, dark nights make for some fantastic stargazing opportunities, and it is the best time to witness the amazing migration of salmon – just to mention a few highlights. Here are eight top places in the UK where you can shelter from the weather and enjoy the action...



© London Wetland Centre

1 London Wetland Centre

Six wildlife hides offer different views across the lakes and lagoons, which in winter are home to attractive ducks such as teal, wigeon and shoveler. The Headley Discovery hide has telescopes and binoculars to help you see the reserve's wildlife close-up. www.org.uk/wetland-centres/london

2 RSPB Belfast Lough

Get fantastic views of wintering wildfowl from Belfast Lough's Window on Wildlife visitor centre; birds such as black-tailed godwits and coots come right up to the window as they forage for food in the mud.

rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/seenature/reserves



© Mark Mearns/Shutterstock

3 Argaty Red Kites, Perthshire

A purpose-built hide gives superb views of Argaty's spectacular red kites. They are most abundant during the winter months; food is put out on the feeding station once a day at 1.30pm from the last Sunday of October through to 20 February. Ranger-led visits to the hide cost £5 and can be booked in advance. argatyredkites.co.uk

4 Garbh Eilean Wildlife Hide, Lochaber, Highland

Look for otters and harbour seals from the shores of Loch Sunart. Waders, ducks and seabirds can also be seen from the hide, and possibly white-tailed and golden eagles. scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/garbh-eilean-wildlife-hide

5 Philiphaugh Salmon Viewing Centre, Selkirk

This unique visitor attraction offers live video footage from inside the Larinier pass to give a fish-eye view of Atlantic salmon as they make their annual migration to spawning grounds on the river Tweed. salmonviewingcentre.com



© G. Fries

6 Kielder Observatory, Northumberland

Located in Kielder Forest, an area renowned for the quality of its dark skies, the observatory offers the chance to learn more about our vast and beautiful universe. Events such as astrophotography nights take place throughout the year (booking is essential). kielderobservatory.org

7 Yarner Wood NNR, Devon

Situated on the eastern fringes of Dartmoor, this ancient woodland is popular among birdwatchers and has its own viewing hide. From late October, well-stocked feeders within view of the hide attract many birds. publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35028?category=59026

8 RSPB Dee Estuary – Point of Ayr, Flintshire

Thousands of wetland birds such as godwits, redshanks, oystercatchers and curlews gather at high tide to roost in winter. rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/seenature/reserves



© Andy Davis/RSPB




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Joe Cornish, landscape photographer

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Photo: David Ward

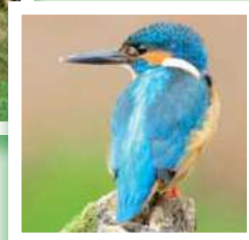
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E&OE



On his first visit to Iceland, James Shooter defies his usual instincts and takes in as much of the country as possible on an epic photography road trip that leads to Látrabjarg cliffs

Having wanted to visit the land of fire and ice since first picking up a camera, I finally took the plunge and went off to explore Iceland in late spring this year. I use spring in the loosest sense of the word, as it snowed while camping and I lost the feeling in my fingers and toes on numerous occasions.

If you put the November-style weather aside, the great thing about May in a country on the edge of the Arctic is the hours of daylight. I could wake up at 3am and start shooting, have a quick sleep in the middle of the day, when the light was at its harshest, and then carry on shooting until 11pm. The other good thing about Iceland is the unpredictability of the weather. If you don't like the conditions in front of you, wait five minutes, and sure enough the weather gods will flip to the other end of the spectrum. Having said that,

with 11 days in the field on this trip, I was out camera-in-hand for every sunrise and sunset on offer, and only two of those sessions provided the goods with the golden light I had dreamt about.

As this was my first trip to Iceland, I ignored my own instinct as a photographer, which is to spend lots of time in a few locations. Instead, I planned to drive frantically round the country in order to see as much as possible. I ended up covering around 2,000 miles, most of which seemed to be on narrow, gravel roads with stunning mountain scenery and gigantic waterfalls around every corner.

One particular morning, after having driven through the night, I arrived at my first location to find the most amazing light illuminating the snow-capped mountains in the north. After that, I set off to a headland at Húsavík and watched

hundreds of whales in the bay below, exhaling spray in the early morning rays. Magical.

My favourite session was an evening spent at the seabird cliffs of Látrabjarg, in the Westfjords. The cliffs are quite far away from Reykjavík, so it took several hours of driving followed by a three-hour ferry crossing to get there, but it proved to be worth it. Less than five minutes after arriving, I saw my first ever Arctic fox, which later came strolling past me with a seabird egg in its mouth.

The light was delicious, the wildlife very approachable and the scenery breathtaking. This was one of the last images I took, just before 11pm. I crept close to this puffin to take a wideangle photograph, as we enjoyed the sunset together. Sun, sea and surf with a puffin to boot. It's nice when it all comes together.



On the wing

On a quest to uncover the story behind a striking image of a kestrel, Steve Young is fortunate to enjoy his own close-up encounter with the bird in question

above Kestrel: As soon as the mealworms were put out, down came the kestrel; this shot has captured the bird just about to land, with its wings fully spread.

below Kestrel running: My version of the running shot; not as good as the one I originally saw, I have to admit, but I only had two goes at taking it!

As well as writing for *OP* and taking the odd photograph, I am also the photo judge for a webzine bird site. Between 600 and 800 images are submitted weekly, all of which are automatically entered into the Photo of the Week competition; it is very enjoyable to do.

Recently, during my daily browse through the images, I came across a photo of a female kestrel running straight at the camera, ready to pluck her prey from the ground. It was a certain weekly winner, but something about the shot raised doubts in my mind. Kestrels are not

known for their tameness, so I wondered if it was a captive bird, or whether unethical means had been used to make the kestrel fly down to either caged or live bait. Just how had the photographer managed to take the image?

Before I could choose it as the winner I had to find out more details; it was time to get in touch with the photographer, Austin Thomas. A couple of emails later, I discovered that Austin lived just 30 minutes away from me, and we had met a few years ago at my local patch at Seaforth. He invited me to visit the kestrel site to allay any fears I had and to take some of my own images.

Needless to say, I couldn't resist the kind offer. A couple of days later I was drinking tea while looking enviously at Austin's photo-studio garden.

The kestrel was not a garden bird, but the site, a private farm, was just a five-minute drive away. We parked up, and within a few minutes the female kestrel duly flew over and perched on a barn roof. Armed with a box of mealworms, Austin scattered a handful on to the path and turned to walk back to the car. Before he had taken two steps, the kestrel flew down and ran around

catching the mealworms before flying back up to the roof. It was all over in a matter of seconds.

Unable to resist, I lay on the ground alongside the car wheels as Austin threw another handful of worms. Sure enough, the kestrel flew straight at me and I got a few shots before it landed. It then ran towards its prey, just as it had done in the original photo I'd seen.

Now this all sounds remarkably simple and easy, but Austin explained to me that it had taken a long, long time for the kestrel to become accustomed to him. He'd started feeding the bird during the wet winter months just to see if it would actually come down, and after many attempts it had noticed the food and come down briefly. But with daily visits, around an hour before dusk, it eventually became more regular until it appeared when the car did. Feeding is only done for a short spell with a handful or two of mealworms, almost a 'bedtime snack', so the bird does not become dependent on this source of food.

After all my concerns I was glad to give Austin's image the title of Photo of the Week; it also went on to be voted Photo of the Year by a panel of five judges.



Steve's November highlights



Bird of the month

Lots of Bewick's swans will be arriving back in the UK around now, having left their Siberian breeding grounds, and some of them will spend the winter at a number of sites around the country. Slimbridge WWT in Gloucestershire and Welney WWT in Norfolk are two of the best places to see and photograph them.

Bewick's are similar to whooper swans, but are smaller, with less yellow on the bill. Both species share the same white plumage and black legs.

Bewick's swans enjoy our milder winter weather, feeding on crops such as potato, but they also visit the reserves mentioned for easy feeds of grain. Family parties can be seen together; the younger birds are greyer with pinkish bills instead of yellow.



top left Bewick's is smaller than whooper swan and has less yellow showing on its bill.

top right Flocks of Bewick's can be very noisy, with much calling and flapping, for reasons that are known only to the birds.

above At many sites, good flight shots are possible as birds come and go to their feeding areas; this shot was taken at Slimbridge.

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP



Bird photography is a fantastic hobby, but sometimes it seems a little bit random just photographing a species here and there; it can be better to have some sort of aim or project in mind to rekindle enthusiasm and ideas.

Choose a simple, realistic challenge that is achievable and enjoyable; focusing on the birds at your local reserve, park or garden is a good start. If you want something more specialised, consider a subject such as plumage differences of gulls.

Last year I was regularly visited by a robin, which first visited as a fresh juvenile. Over the weeks that followed, it kept coming back daily to the same area, and as the plumage began to change I set about recording the differences. It was fascinating to watch and record the red feathers moulting through the brown, spotty juvenile ones, but just before it was almost fully moulted it stopped visiting. It could have just decided to move on to a different territory, or perhaps it was taken by a cat or a sparrowhawk.

left Robin (juvenile): When I first saw the bird on 29 May it had juvenile plumage, with just one red feather on the lower breast.

centre Robin (partial moult): By 18 June, lots of red breast feathers had moulted through.

right Robin (almost complete): With just a few throat and face feathers to go, this is one of the last photographs I took of the bird, on 30 June, before it disappeared.

LOCATION OF THE MONTH



© Robert Cantis

Elmley Nature Reserve, Kent

Covering 3,250 acres, Elmley is one of the largest bird reserves in England. Despite being just one hour from London, it feels like a wilderness, particularly during late autumn and winter. Dominated by vast areas of coastal grazing marsh, it is renowned for its large numbers of breeding waders – the sky is often filled with birds such as dunlins, black-tailed godwits and grey plovers, among many others.

The real highlight at Elmley, however, is the awesome birds of prey that soar above the sweeping landscape. Merlins, hen harriers, short-eared owls and marsh harriers can often be seen sailing low over the ground in search of prey.

Last year, three custom-built shepherd's huts were installed at Elmley, making it the UK's only national nature reserve where you can spend the night.

Location Elmley is situated to the south of the Isle of Sheppey in Kent.

Facilities Hides (including one with disabled access), nature trails, toilets.

Accommodation The shepherd's huts are available for hire from £75 per night – see website for more details.

Opening times Open from 8am until sunset (closed Tuesdays).

Entry fee £5 per car (payable via an honesty box system).

Website elmleynaturereserve.co.uk



Outdoor Photography

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Your photos of your favourite locations could earn you £50! Send us up to 10 of your best digital images or slides and, if one is selected, you will earn £50.



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Send us your very best outdoor images, and if you're chosen as our winner you will receive a Lowepro Photo Sport 200 AW, worth £149. Perfect for photographers on the go, it has a raft of great features, including an Ultra-Cinch Camera Chamber to protect your gear, built-in All Weather cover, and a dedicated hydration pocket.



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We are always on the lookout for inspiring new features. If you have a great idea for an article then please send a short outline (no more than 60 words), plus five accompanying low-res images for our consideration.

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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Take on our photo challenge – send us your best low light photographs (see page 111), and as well as having your image featured in the March 2016 issue of *OP*, you could also win a superb Fjällräven Bergen 30 backpack, worth £100.



OP READER DAYS

Register your interest for our soon to be announced *OP* Reader Days, and you could be joining us and some of our professional contributors at one of a number of great UK locations. Please send your full contact details, including name, postal address, and a daytime telephone number to anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com, or use our postal submission form.



LETTERS

Write to us! Please send your views, opinions and musings to claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com, or send your comments to us by post. If your letter is published as our 'Letter of the Month' you'll win a prize; this month we gave away a Samsung 128GB EVO MicroSDXC memory card with adapter, worth £93.99.

Please note: letters may be edited.



Where in the world?

If you can name the stunning mountainous coastline above, you could soon be the winner of an excellent Manfrotto Advanced Travel Backpack worth £109.

Where is it?

This photograph shows a dramatic coastline with mountains and a blue sea. It is a view of the Fjällräven Bergen 30 backpack.

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WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Tell us the name of the location featured on page 112 and this month you could win a Manfrotto Advanced Travel Backpack worth £109.95. Divided into two main compartments – one for photo gear and one for personal belongings – this versatile bag is ideal for those who want to have all their essentials close to hand and easy to access.



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- 2 Add your name to your image filenames
- 3 Write your name and contact details on your CD

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We are unable to accept speculative submissions via email, so please do not send work in this way, unless requested to do so by a member of the *OP* editorial team.

WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS

You can send us links to your website, for us to view your general work only. Please note that strictly no correspondence will be entered into regarding website submissions. Send the link to opweb@thegmcgroup.com.

SEND POSTAL SUBMISSIONS TO:

Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN

RETURN OF YOUR WORK

Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

PLEASE NOTE

Due to the many submissions we receive from our readers each month, no correspondence can be entered into. If you have not heard from us within 10 weeks (except for Viewpoints) then it is unlikely we will be using your work in the magazine on this occasion.

IMPORTANT

GMC Publications cannot accept liability for the loss or damage of any unsolicited material, including slides.

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If you would like an exhibition or event to be included in *Outdoor Photography*, please email Anna Bonita Evans at anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com **at least 10 weeks in advance.** You can also send information to the postal address (above).

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Distagon 28mm F2	£979.00
Planar 50mm F1.4	£559.00
Planar 85mm F1.4	£989.00
APD Sonnar 135mm F2	£1599.00
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88 **Gearing up**

90 **Camera test**



IS THE SONY A7R II A GAME CHANGER?

Andy Luck tests this eagerly anticipated new 42MP full-frame camera



Aclima Lars Monsen Anárjohka Polo with Zip ◀

The ideal baselayer for your outdoor pursuits this winter, Aclima's latest garment is made from 100% merino wool. Excellent at regulating body temperature and drawing moisture away from the skin, this natural material will keep you warm yet comfortable while trekking in the mountains. The top also has a high-cut collar to keep you cosy, a handy zip pocket on the chest for necessary gear, plus thumbholes in each sleeve to keep your hands and wrists protected from the elements.

Guide price £89.95
nordicoutdoor.co.uk

Wacom Bamboo Spark ▼

Turn your handwritten thoughts into digital notes with Wacom's latest smart folio and pen. By simply pushing a button, the Bamboo Spark synchronises what's been written or sketched on the notepad to other electrical devices via the Wacom Cloud. With the help of the Bamboo Spark app on your phone, the folio's electro-magnetic resonance board and a Bluetooth beam from the pen, you can capture ideas in both physical and digital ink.

Guide price £119.99
wacom.com



WEARING U

Anatom Q3 Braeriach ▼

Anatom's latest boot, the Q3 Braeriach, is designed for those who enjoy hiking up uneven terrain. Featuring the Tri.aria waterproof membrane system, a Vibram outsole for grip, a rubber toe bumper plus improved shock absorption from its phylon midsole, the Q3 is stable and responsive on rough ground and gives you the protection and comfort you need.

Guide price £144.95
anatomfootwear.co.uk



Mobi Pro Eyefi 16GB ▼

Wirelessly transfer Raw and JPEG files from your camera to your smartphone, tablet or computer with Eyefi's Mobi Pro 16GB WiFi SDHC memory card. You can use your camera's menu to select and transfer only the images you want either via your existing home network or, if on location, it will create and use a private, secure connection through the Eyefi Cloud.

Guide price £49.99
eyefi.com



Colour Confidence Cube

This colour capture and matching device makes it easy to record raw colour data with a simple tap, and is aimed at creative professionals who want to remove the guesswork from colour matching. It uses a controlled lighting sequence through an aperture to identify different hues accurately and will output in RGB, CMYK, HEX, Lab and LRV colour spaces.

Guide price £149.95
colourconfidence.com



Epson Expression Photo XP960 ▼

A great example of how A3 printers don't have to dominate your studio, the compact Expression Photo XP960 is a wonderful way for you to experiment with larger format printing – without a wildly expensive price tag. By including Epson's six-colour Claria Photo HD Ink, the XP960 produces high quality photographic prints thanks to its delivery of smooth tonal gradations, deep natural blacks and rich, vibrant colours.

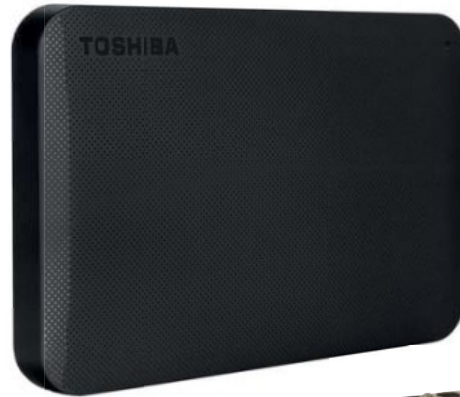
Guide price £250
epson.co.uk



Toshiba Canvio Ready ▼

Tiny but mighty, Toshiba's latest external hard drive, the Canvio Ready, is only 2.5in wide but can transfer data at an impressive 5GB per second and store up to 3TB of data. It has an easy plug-and-play design and features an internal shock sensor to safeguard your data, and is compatible with both USB 2.0 and 3.0 ports.

Guide price £132 (3TB version)
toshiba.eu



Fjällräven Abisko Lite ▼

Leading outdoor clothing company Fjällräven's new jacket, the Abisko Lite, is a great overlay for active trips out into the wilderness. Made from durable stretch fabric and G-1000 Lite material to protect you against the wind and rain, it is comfortable to wear and ventilates extremely well, and will leave you less sweaty than a totally waterproof garment.

Guide price £175
fjallraven.co.uk



Kenro 201 Professional Travel Tripod Kit ►

Part of Kenro's new collection of own-brand tripods, the 201 Professional Travel Tripod Kit is ideal for those wanting versatility when out on a shoot.

Easily converted into a monopod, the tripod can also be used at very low heights thanks to its short central column. Constructed from magnesium aluminium alloy for ease of transportation, the 201 includes a dual action ball head, Arca Swiss style quick release plate and a built-in spirit level.

Guide price £161.94
kenro.co.uk



Sony A7R II

This eagerly anticipated new 42MP full-frame offering from Sony has a lot to live up to. **Andy Luck** puts it to the test to see whether all the hype surrounding the camera is deserved

Guide price £2,599 (body only)

Contact sony.co.uk



There is something undeniably liberating about having all the resolving power of the best full-frame DSLR cameras, but in a much smaller and lighter package. A camera such as the new Sony A7R II is just so much more portable and usable whenever the picture-taking mood grabs you. It's a pleasure to carry around, which I can't say about my much bulkier DSLR.

The A7R II continues the small but powerful precedent set by the A7R, and now packs a newly developed 42MP back-illuminated sensor. This even eclipses the Nikon D810's 36MP and only falls marginally short of Canon's new 50MP EOS 5DS. All the extra features mean the A7R II has put on a little weight in the upgrade process, coming in at 628g with battery, compared to the original A7R's 465g. But that stills leaves it being significantly lighter than its full-frame rivals – the EOS 5DS weighs in at 895g and the D810 tips the scales at 980g.

Those extra 300 or so grams may not sound much but, along with the added bulk of these DSLRs, they really make their presence felt over a long day out shooting on location.

The short flange distance in the A7R II, due to the lack of a mirror, makes it possible to fit many other brands' lenses to it via lens or body adaptors. This opens up the world of high quality manual lenses, which can be great fun to use and often very impressive in terms of final image output. With peaking and image zoom available through the electronic viewfinder, manual focus can be more accurate than autofocus for close-up and macro subjects.

Lauding the ability to work with manual lenses doesn't imply the camera is a slouch in the autofocus department – far from it. The fast hybrid autofocus system of the A7R II has 399 focal plane phase-detection points that cover an impressive 45% of the image area;

Large white butterfly. Focus peaking makes fine, manual focus adjustments for macro and close-up subjects much easier. *Sony A7R II with Sony E 18-200mm f/3.5-6.3 OSS lens (APSC mode), ISO 200, 1/250sec at f/6.3*

claimed by Sony to be more coverage than any other full-frame camera. There is also an option to use 25-point contrast-detection autofocus. The snappy autofocus plus a maximum frame rate of five frames per second mean the A7R II gives up very little in terms of operating speed when compared to conventional full-frame DSLRs.

The electronic OLED viewfinder is one of the best I've come across, with 100% coverage, 2,359,296 dots, Zeiss T* coating and the world's highest claimed viewfinder magnification of 0.78x. It provides a big, punchy picture with good shadow and highlight detail. All the information and compositional overlays are there, such as zebras, grids, exposure, focus points, focus zoom and histogram – just about everything you could possibly need to see while taking an image, without having to take the camera away from your eye.

The A7R II also has the superb five-axis in-body image stabilisation of the Sony A7 II, which provides camera shake compensation equivalent to four and a half stops with any lens you fit to the camera. It is extremely effective, and also works very well for shooting handheld video.

LIKES

- ✓ 42MP sensor
- ✓ Five-axis in-body image stabilisation
- ✓ Superb 4K video to card with S-Log2
- ✓ Electronic First Shutter option
- ✓ Silent shooting
- ✓ Two batteries and wall charger supplied with camera
- ✓ Adaptability offered by the lens mount

DISLIKES

- ✗ Slow Motion HD limited to 720p





SPECS

Sensor 42.4MP full-frame 35mm BSI CMOS sensor

Lens mount Sony E

Processor Bionz X

Autofocus Fast Hybrid system; 25 contrast-detect and 399 phase-detect points

Shutter speeds 30-1/8000sec

ISO range 50-102,400

LCD 3in tilting with 1.23 million dots

EVF XGA, OLED 2.4 million dot

Video Full HD 1080/50p, 720/100p, 4K full-frame and super 35mm XAVC S, 100Mbps

Stabilisation Five-axis in-body image stabilisation

Card format SD, SDHC, SDXC, Memory Stick

Connectivity USB 2.0, micro HDMI, NFC

Battery life 340 shots (CIPA)

Size 127 x 96 x 60mm

Weight 625g (with battery)



above (left) Ivy in forest. The fabulous level of detail from the 42MP BSI sensor is right up in medium format territory.

Sony A7R II with Sony E 10-18mm f/4 OSS lens (full-frame mode), ISO 200, 1/40sec at f/9

Video in the A7R II is a step up from the A7 II, with 4K recording in XAVC S5 format for breathtaking detail in either full-frame or cropped super 35mm format. It can be shot direct to the in-camera card or via a clean HDMI output. In the super 35mm (APSC) crop mode, full pixel readout without pixel binning provides superb crisp video with no appreciable artifacts. It inexplicably gives ground in the standard HD slow motion mode. The 100 (or 120 in NTSC) frames per second is only available in 720p, whereas the Panasonic GH4 does 96 frames per second in 1080p. I hope this is rectified with a swift firmware update, especially as it seems to be available in the new A7S II model.

One of the few downsides to the original A7R was the very noisy shutter. This has been effectively addressed in the new model with a totally redesigned unit that cuts mechanical front/rear curtain vibration by 50%.

above Grey heron. The five-axis IBIS has effectively stabilised a big, hefty super-zoom at the full 600mm reach, with a very slow shutter speed – impressive! *Sony A7R II with Tamron 150-600mm f/5-6.3 VC USD lens (full-frame mode), ISO 800, 1/160sec at f/6.3*

VERDICT

The Sony A7R II is the world's first 35mm full-frame camera with a back-illuminated sensor, which when combined with the Bionz processor, high megapixel count and no low-pass filter provides amazing picture quality with real clarity or 'pop'. The fact that this all comes with in-body image stabilisation, silent shooting, an ISO maximum of 102,400, 4K video to internal card and a host of other features in a small, light body makes it one of the best hybrid cameras you can currently buy.

RATINGS

Handling	97%
Performance	98%
Specification	98%
Value	96%

OVERALL
97.25%

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full frame CMOS sensor



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1080p movie mode



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Full Frame CMOS sensor



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5.0 fps
Full Frame CMOS sensor



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5.0 fps
1080p movie mode



D5500 Body £539

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Nikon | YEAR WARRANTY

D7100
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6.0 fps
1080p movie mode



D7100 From £706

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D7200
24.2 megapixels
6.0 fps
1080p movie mode



D7200 From £849

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D610
24.3 megapixels
6.0 fps
1080p movie mode



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6.5 fps
Full Frame CMOS sensor



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Full Frame CMOS sensor



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11.0 fps
Full Frame CMOS sensor



D4s £4449

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D4s Body
★★★★★ 'Spectacular Camera'
Charlie Delta - Hertfordshire

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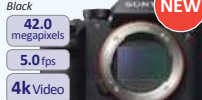


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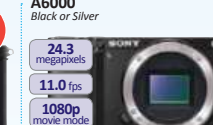
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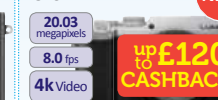


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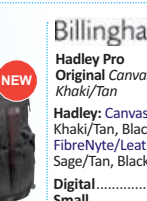
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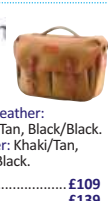
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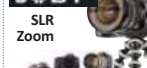
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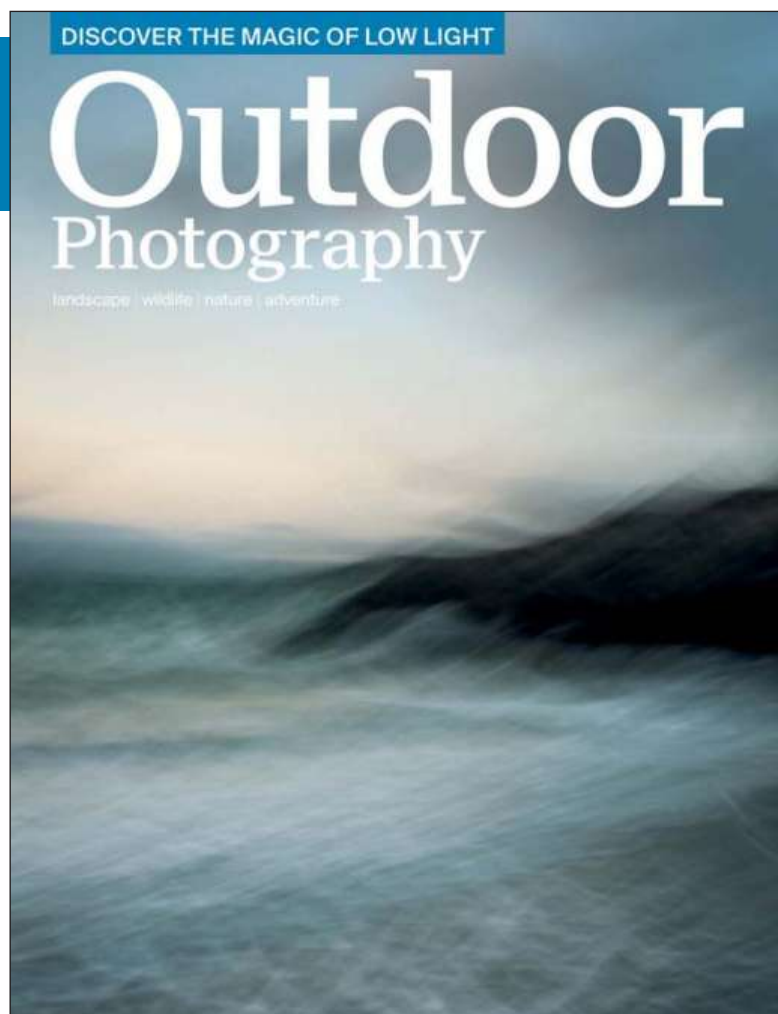
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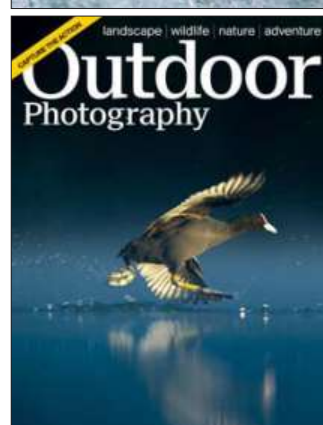
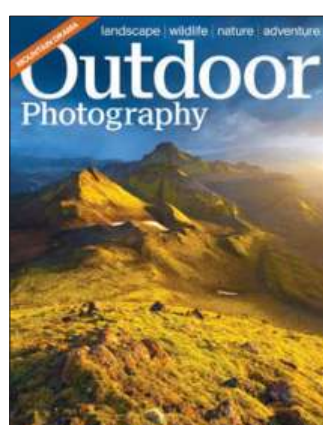
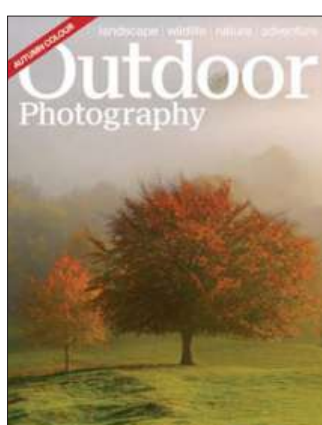
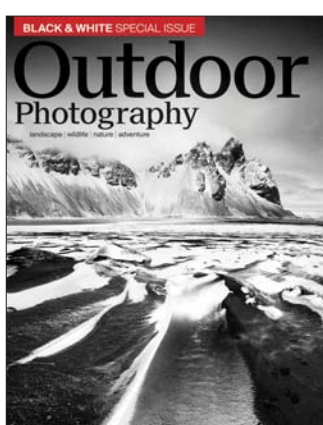
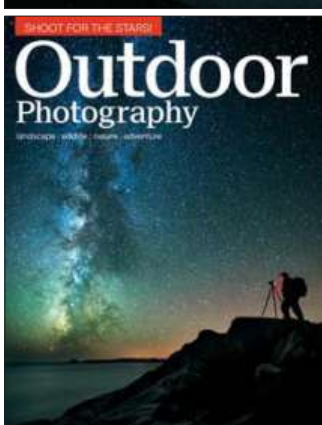
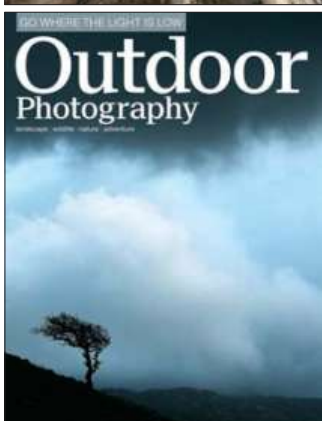
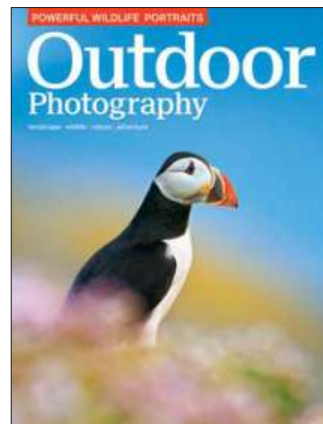
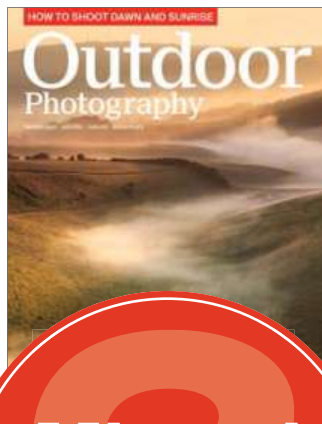
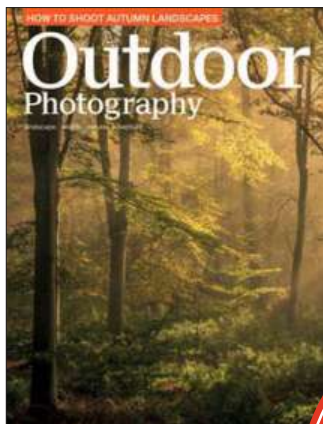
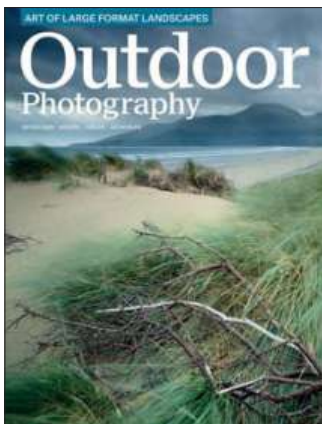
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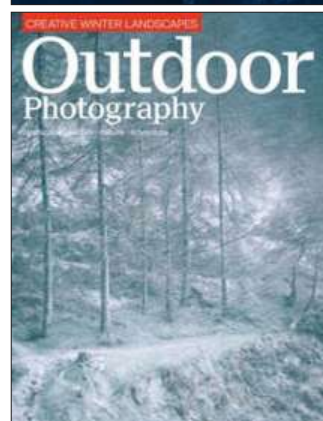
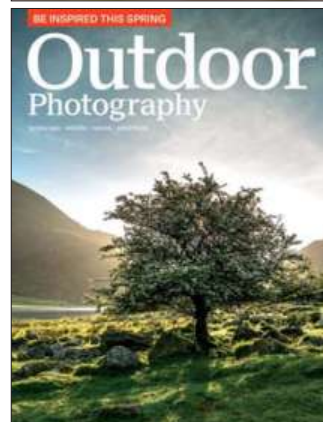
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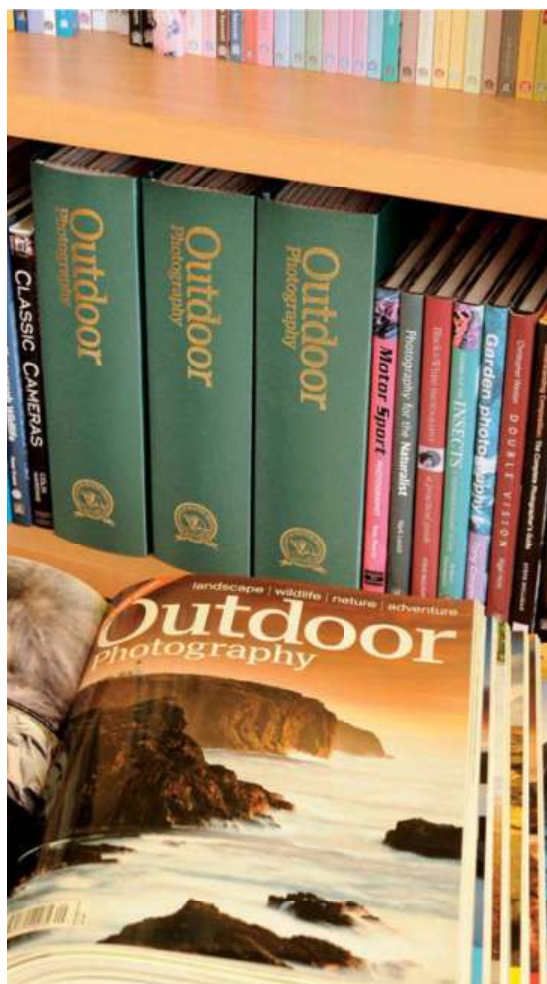


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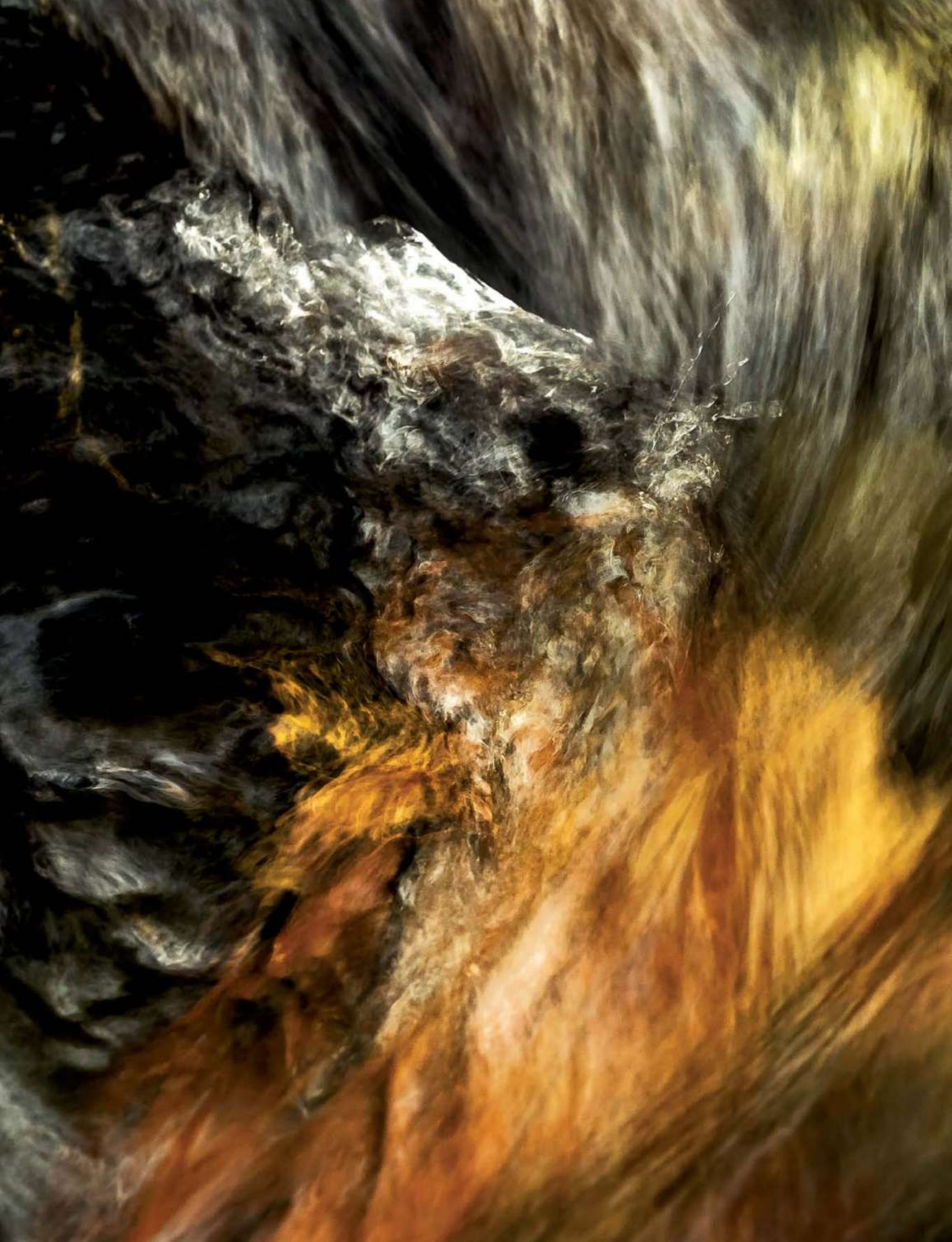


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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE
THING THIS MONTH...

Water

In our August issue, we set you the task of capturing images of water in all its wonderful forms, and you certainly rose to the challenge. The competition was fierce but here is the winner of a Coleman Aravis 2 tent, and our 12 runners-up

WINNER

David Baird

(left) About a year ago I was lucky enough to attend a workshop on abstract photography run by Ted Leeming and Morag Paterson, which gave me a real enthusiasm for experimenting with abstracts. While on holiday in the north-west Highlands this summer I spent a happy afternoon exploring the detail in the gin-clear waters of a burn, and this image came from that. Olympus OMD-EM1 with 60mm macro lens, ISO 200, 1/30sec at f/6.3

Ray Wilson

(right, top) Driving home from a day out walking on the Fife coastal path I had a suspicion that there was a good sunset on the way. Arriving at Shell Bay, I just had enough time to walk from the car park to the shore, set up and shoot. Nikon D7000 with Nikkor 18-70mm f/3.5-4.5 lens at 18mm, ISO 100, 30sec at f/22, polariser, 0.9 ND grad, Vanguard Alta Pro tripod

Margaret Soraya

(right, middle) Waves at sunset on Scarista beach on the Isle of Harris, in the Outer Hebrides. Nikon D700 with Nikon 28-300mm lens at 300mm, ISO 125, 1/5sec at f/22, handheld sorayalandscape.com

Pod Parton

(right, bottom) We were holidaying in Betws-y-Coed, in Snowdonia. It had been raining for some weeks and the rivers were as full as I had seen them. We headed for Swallow Falls hoping for nice, subdued light; we were not disappointed. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-105mm lens at 24mm, ISO 50, 0.4sec at f/16, tripod





Ruth Asher

(left, top) I arrived at Bembridge about two and a half hours before sunset but wasn't expecting to capture any images for at least another hour. While waiting for the warm hues of the golden hour and for the tide to go out I decided to experiment with a six-stop neutral density filter. Although the sunset was pleasing, casting a beautiful warm glow on the side of the life boat station, from all the images I created that evening I much prefer this long exposure picture captured before the golden light arrived.

Nikon D800 with Nikkor 24-70mm lens at 24 mm, ISO 100, 10sec at f/22, Lee Little Stopper, tripod
ruthasherphotography.co.uk

Matt Smart

(left, middle) This shot of the Black Cuillins from Elgol bay, on the Isle of Skye, was taken in March of this year. It was the last morning of a three-night stay at Pier House, right on the bay. For the majority of my visit this view was obscured by low cloud, but on that morning it was clear across the bay, revealing the snow-capped mountains. I opted for a long exposure to enhance the already dramatic and atmospheric scene.

Canon EOS 650D with Canon EF-S 17-85mm lens at 26mm, ISO 100, 110sec at f/11, Lee Big Stopper, Manfrotto 190 tripod



Brian Angus

(left, bottom) At Seaham, in County Durham, if we get a strong north-easterly wind and a high tide, the result can be spectacular waves – they reached to about 110ft in this picture.

Sony SLT A37 with Tamron 18-270mm lens at 150mm, ISO 100, 1/200sec at f/13, monopod

Brendan Waterman

(right, top) This image was taken on the Dorset coastline at Old Harry Rocks near Studland. My wife and I started the 30-minute walk to this viewpoint when it was still raining, with the hope that it would stop for a few shots once we arrived. We were lucky enough to have a break of weather for about 10 minutes, which allowed me to create this image. I like the clouds and how they bring depth against the turquoise sea.

Canon EOS 6D with Canon 17-40mm f/4 L lens at 17mm, ISO 100, 3.2sec at f/18, Lee Little Stopper, 2-stop ND grad hard, Manfrotto 190 tripod
waterman-photography.com



Geraint Evans

(right, bottom) I spent a week in western Ireland, and visited Achill Island. Early morning was overcast with very light rain but there were shafts of intense light. I used a 10-stop filter and intentional camera movement.

Nikon D7100 with Sigma 10-20mm DC HSM lens at 19mm, ISO 100, 10sec at f/16, Haida 10-stop filter
[flickr: geraint1](https://www.flickr.com/photos/geraint1/)





Ric Harding

(above) This shows the Dynjandi Falls in the Westfjord area of Iceland. Their impressive height can be gauged from the size of the figure that I deliberately included in the bottom right hand corner. I tried several shutter speeds and found half a second was a good compromise that showed movement in the water without losing detail by it becoming too 'milky'.

Nikon D810 with Nikkor 80-400mm VR lens at 320mm, ISO 31, 0.5sec at f/40, tripod

Chris Lishman

(left) I love to explore cameo scenes when on location, and this one, taken at Guyzance Weir in Northumberland, was crying out for a long exposure to accentuate the beautiful curves of the weir and the water flowing over the top.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L II USM at 35mm, ISO 160, 62sec at f/8, Lee Big Stopper, Manfrotto tripod, cable release
chrislishman.com

Andrew Harbin

(right, top) This is Melin Court waterfall in the Vale Of Neath, Wales. It's a great place to go if you like waterfalls, as there are plenty to choose from. Some can be busy with visitors, but behind all that noise there is a quiet majesty in the falls. Under-developing the image in Photoshop removed the clutter of the background and the foreground water to reveal a delicate, almost naked waterfall underneath... its essence.

Canon EOS 400D with Canon 18-55mm lens at 33mm, ISO 200, 1.6sec at f/29, 0.6 ND filter
andyharbin.co.uk

Pedro Esteves

(right, bottom) At the end of a rainy day the weather started to change and I was able to photograph this beautiful sunset during low tide at Nazaré, Portugal.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 24-105mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 1/13sec at f/11, ND filter, tripod

YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

Low light

The increasing number of cameras with exceptional low light shooting capabilities has opened up a wonderful new world of photography. There can be few things more exciting than heading out on location in the twilight hours or when the weather conditions are poor to photographically explore views your eyes can barely discern. For inspiration read Norman McCloskey's feature on page 30, then head out into the gloom. We can't wait to see your results!

Enter and you could win a Fjällräven Bergen 30 backpack worth £100!

The winner of the 'Low light' challenge will not only have their winning image published, along with our selection of runners-up, in the March 2016 issue of *OP*, but will also win a Fjällräven Bergen 30 backpack worth £100. A waterproof daypack with a roll-down opening and removable inner bag, the Bergen 30 has an ergonomic back panel with ventilation, reflectors and attachments for trekking poles. The Bergen 30 is built to keep your equipment safe and dry during outdoor adventures. Find out more by visiting fjallraven.co.uk.

**Closing date
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See page 84 for an entry form and our terms and conditions.





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b) Lord Howe Island, Australia



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Keith Greenough

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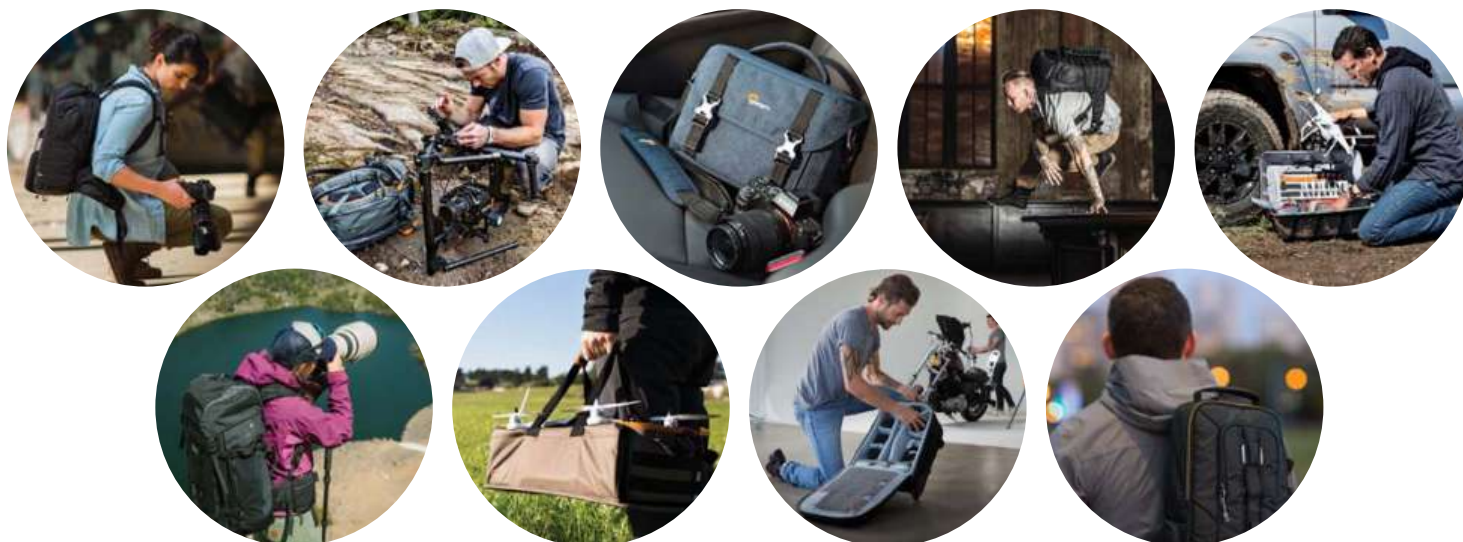
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